IN THE

SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES

October Term, 1975

No. 75-5491

JAMES TYRONE WOODSON and LUBY WAITON,

Petitioners,

-v.-

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA,

Respondent.

PETITION FOR WRIT OF CERTIORARI TO THE SUPREME COURT OF NORTH CAROLINA

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THE SUPREME COURT OF NORTH CAROLINA

Petitioners pray that a writ of certiorari issue to review the judgment of the Supreme Court of the State of North Carolina entered on June 26, 1975.

CITATION TO OPINION BELOW

The opinion of the Supreme Court of North Carolina is reported at __N.C.__, 215 S.E.2d 607 (1975), and is set out in Appendix A hereto, pp. 1a-15a, infra.

JURISDICTION

The judgment of the Supreme Court of North Carolina was entered on June 26, 1975, and is set out in Appendix A hereto. Jurisdiction of this Court is invoked under 28 U.S.C. §1257(3), petitioners having asserted below and asserting here deprivation of rights secured by the Constitution of the United States.

QUESTION PRESENTED

Whether the imposition and carrying out of the sentence of death for the crime of murder under the law of North Carolina violates the Eighth or Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States?

CONSTITUTIONAL AND STATUTORY
PROVISIONS INVOLVED

1. This case involves the Eighth and Fourteenth Amendments to the Constitution of the United States.

2. This case also involves the following provisions of the General Statutes of North Carolina:

N. C. Sess. Laws 1973 (2nd sess., 1974), c. 1201, §1, amending N.C. Gen. Stat. §14-17 (1974 cum. supp.):

> "Murder in the first and second degree defined; punishment.--A murder which shall be perpetrated by means of poison, lying in wait, imprisonment, starving, torture, or by any other kind of willful, deliberate and premeditated killing, or which shall be committed in the perpetration or attempt to perpetrate any arson, rape, robbery, kidnapping, burglary or other felony, shall be deemed to be murder in the first degree and shall be punished with death. All other kinds of murder shall be deemed murder in the second degree, and shall be punished by imprisonment for a term of not less than two years nor more than life imprisonment in the State's prison."

§14-32 (1974 cum. supp.):

> "Felonious assault with deadly weapon with intent to kill or inflicting serious injury; punishments.--(a) Any person who assaults another person with a deadly weapon with intent to kill and inflicts serious injury is guilty of a felony punishable by a fine, imprisonment for not more than 20 years, or both such fine and imprisonment.
>
> (b) Any person who assaults another person with a deadly weapon and inflicts serious injury is guilty of a felony punishable by a fine, imprisonment for not more than 10 years, or both such fine and imprisonment.
>
> (c) Any person who assaults another person with a deadly weapon with intent to kill is guilty of a felony punishable by a fine, imprisonment for not more than 10 years, or both such fine and imprisonment."

§14-87 (repl. vol. 1969):

"Robbery with firearms or other dangerous weapons.--Any person or persons who, having in possession or with the use or threatened use of any firearms or other dangerous weapon, implement or means, whereby the life of a person is endangered or threatened, unlawfully takes or attempts to take personal property from another or from any place of business, residence or banking institution or any other place where there is a person or persons in attendance, at any time, either day or night, or who aids or abets any such person or persons in the commission of such crime, shall be guilty of a felony and upon conviction thereof shall be punished by imprisonment for not less than five nor more than thirty years."

§15-176.3 (repl. vol. 1975):

"Informing and questioning potential jurors on consequences of guilty verdict.--When a jury is being selected for a case in which the defendant is indicted for a crime for which the penalty is a sentence of death, the court, the defense, or the State may inform any person called to serve as a potential juror that the death penalty will be imposed upon the return of a verdict of guilty of that crime and may inquire of any person called to serve as a potential juror whether that person understands the consequences of a verdict of guilty of that crime."

§15-176.4 (repl. vol. 1975):

"Instruction to jury on consequences of guilty verdict.--When a defendant is indicted for a crime for which the penalty is a sentence of death, the court, upon request by either party, shall instruct the jury that the death penalty will be imposed upon the return of a verdict of guilty of that crime."

§15-176.5 (repl. vol. 1975):

"Argument to jury on consequences of guilty verdict.--When a case will be submitted to a jury on a charge for which the penalty is a sentence of death, either party in its argument to the jury may indicate the consequences of a verdict of guilty of that charge."

§15-187 (repl. vol. 1975):

"Death by administration of lethal gas.--Death by electrocution under sentence of law is hereby abolished and death by the administration of lethal gas substituted therefor."

§15-188 (repl. vol. 1975):

"Manner and place of execution.--The mode of executing a death sentence must in every case be by causing the convict or felon to inhale lethal gas of sufficient quantity to cause death, and the administration of such lethal gas must be continued until such convict or felon is dead; and when any person, convict or felon shall be sentenced by any court of the State having competent jurisdiction to be so executed, such punishment shall only be inflicted within a permanent death chamber which the superintendent of the State penitentiary is hereby authorized and directed to provide within the walls of the North Carolina penitentiary at Raleigh, North Carolina. The superintendent of the State penitentiary shall also cause to be provided, in conformity with this article and approved by the Governor and Council of State, the necessary appliances for the infliction of the punishment of death in accordance with the requirements of this article."

STATEMENT OF THE CASE

This is a petition for a writ of certiorari to review the judgment of the Supreme Court of North Carolina, entered on June 26, 1975, affirming petitioners' convictions and death sentences for first degree murder. Petitioner James Tyrone Woodson and petitioner Luby Waxton, indigent black men, were convicted and sentenced to death on December 9, 1974, after a joint trial in the Harnett County Superior Court, for the murder of Mrs. Shirley Whittington Butler, a white woman. 1/

1/ At this trial, petitioners were convicted of the armed robbery of Mrs. Butler, but these judgments were arrested, since the armed robbery was the predicate felony of the felony murder counts. R. 155-156. Petitioner Waxton was also convicted of the crime of assault with a deadly weapon with intent to kill for an assault upon Mr. R. N. Stancil, during the robbery, and he was sentenced to a term of twenty years imprisonment for this crime. R. 154.

The State's case against petitioners consisted primarily of the testimony of two co-defendants, Leonard Maurice Tucker and Johnnie Lee Carroll. Although the State introduced the testimony of twelve other witnesses[2] and various exhibits, no fingerprint, ballistics, or other physical evidence directly linked petitioners to the crime, and the State's other eye witness, R.N.Stancil, could not place them on the scene.[3] Tucker and Carroll were indicted for first degree

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2/ Three of these witnesses were policemen who went to the Butler store after the robbery, R. 36-38; one was a pathologist who testified that Mrs. Butler had been killed by a gunshot wound in the head and that the bullet was too fragmented for ballistics testing, R. 44-45; one was a fingerprint expert who testified that Tucker's fingerprints were on a package of Kool cigarettes found in the Butler store after the robbery, R. 51; one, R.N. Stancil, see note 3, infra, entered the Butler store during the robbery; two testified as to the chain of custody of evidence, R. 52-53, 53; two testified concerning the loan of a car to Carroll by his brother-in-law, R. 53; one was a police officer who testified concerning his investigation of the crime, R. 53-56; and one was a firearms expert who testified about the inconclusive ballistics tests he had performed. R. 56.

3/ Stancil testified that he lived across the street from the E-Z Shop, which was operated by Mrs. Butler, R. 52. He entered the shop about 10:15 p.m., June 3, 1974, to buy a Coke and noticed that Mrs. Butler "was not in her place." Ibid. "I met someone coming out who seemed to be in a hurry and went on by me. I saw something on the floor and I was going to pick it up when I heard an explosion. The person I had just met said something like 'look out' . . . . After the explosion I felt pain in my back . . . and saw blood coming off my arm . . . I can't identify the person I saw coming out of the E-Z Shop and I did not see Mrs. Butler." Ibid.

murder and armed robbery with petitioners, but pleaded guilty to lesser offenses, R. 31, on December 2, 1974 (prior to petitioners' trial), and were sentenced to terms of imprisonment.[4]

Tucker's and Carroll's accounts were essentially similar. Tucker testified that he and petitioner Woodson were together between 11:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. on June 3, drinking wine. R. 39. Woodson declared that "he did not want any part of the robbery," R. 44, that they had been discussing with Carroll and petitioner Waxton for the past few days.[5] Waxton came to Tucker's trailer about 9:30 p.m. and asked where Woodson was. Tucker said Woodson was "uptown," R. 39, and Waxton told Tucker to come with him. As the two walked toward Waxton's trailer, they saw Woodson approaching. Waxton hit him in the face and told him that he was going to go along with them. According to Tucker, Waxton told Woodson that "if he didn't come -- if he didn't kill him I [Tucker] would." Ibid. Woodson's eye was bleeding and swollen and he kept his hand over it as he accompanied the two men.

4/ Tucker was sentenced to ten years imprisonment on his plea of guilty to a charge of Accessory After the Fact to Murder, State v. Leonard Maurice Tucker, Harnett County Super. Ct. No. 74-CR-5050 (December 9, 1974), and to not less than twenty nor more than thirty years imprisonment on his plea of guilty to a charge of Armed Robbery, State v. Leonard Maurice Tucker, Harnett County Super. Ct. No. 74-CR-5051 (December 9, 1974), the sentences to run concurrently. Carroll was sentenced to ten years imprisonment on his plea of guilty to a charge of Accessory After the Fact to Armed Robbery, State v. Johnnie Lee Carroll, Harnett County Super. Ct. No. 74-CR-4994 (December 9, 1974), and to ten years imprisonment on his plea of guilty to a charge of Accessory After the Fact to Murder, State v. Johnnie Lee Carroll, Harnett County Super. Ct. No. 74-CR-4995 (December 9, 1974), the sentences to run consecutive

5/ Tucker testified that "[a]bout a week before the 3rd of June Luby [Waxton] told Tyrone [Woodson] and me he wanted to rob something. That is the only time I heard Luby make statements concerning robbing the place." R. 41.

The three proceeded to Waxton's trailer where they met Carroll, who had borrowed his brother-in-law's car for the evening. Woodson told Carroll that Waxton hit him because he was drunk, and Carroll got him a towel to put over his eye. R. 39. [6] Inside the trailer, Waxton took a nickle-plated derringer from a cabinet [7] and put it in his pocket, and Tucker took a .22 caliber automatic rifle from the couch and handed it to Woodson, at Waxton's request. R. 39. "Luby was giving all the orders." R. 43. According to Carroll, "[w]hen Woodson took the gun from Tucker, he said he was going to show him that he wasn't drunk." R. 47.

The four men got into Carroll's brother-in-law's car; Carroll drove, and Woodson sat beside him on the front seat, and Waxton and Tucker sat in the back seat. Waxton declared that they were going to rob the E-Z Shop, but when they arrived, they found customers there and drove on past the store. R. 39. They stopped the car briefly and, at Waxton's direction, Woodson test-fired the rifle by shooting it into the ground twice. R. 43, 45.

6/ Carroll testified that "I could tell that Woodson had been drinking." R. 50.

7/ Although Carroll had previously seen Waxton with a "silver Derringer", he did not see any pistol in Waxton's possession on the night of the crime. R. 46.

They then returned and parked near the store. "Up until the last minute Waxton had instructed Woodson to go in but [he] changed his mind," R. 44, and so Tucker accompanied Waxton into the store, while Carroll and Woodson remained in the car, with the rifle on the floor of the front seat. [8] "Waxton told Woodson not to let anybody in the store," and Woodson said nothing in response. R. 43. Inside the store, Tucker asked Mrs. Butler for a package of Kool cigarettes, and she gave them to him and he paid her. R. 40. He moved down the counter and Waxton also asked for a package of Kools:"the woman handed them to him and Luby then reached into his back pocket, pulled out the Derringer, stuck it around or about the left side of her neck and fired one shot." Ibid. Waxton then leapt over the counter and lifted the money tray from the cash register. [9] As Tucker ran out the door, he passed R.N. Stancil, who was entering the store to buy a Coke, R. 52. [10] Tucker told him to look out and [I] kept walking toward

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8/ According to Tucker, "the rifle was on the floor of the front seat and not in Woodson's hands." R. 43. Carroll, however, testified that Woodson sat with the rifle "in his hand." R. 45.

9/ According to Carroll, however, Tucker emerged from the store carrying the money tray. R. 45.

10/ Carroll testified that "Woodson saw Stancil first. He did not stop him. Woodson got out of the car with the rifle and I pulled him back into the car and told him to put the rifle down." R. 48.

the car. Then I heard a second shot from inside the store. I got in the car and about a couple minutes after the second shot Luby came out of the store walking fast with some paper money in his hand." R. 40. The men drove to Waxton's mother's house (where Carroll, Waxton's half-brother, lived), and on the way Waxton said that "he shot the man in the back" in the store. Ibid.

At the house, Tucker and Waxton counted the money in the bathroom: "[t]here was about $280 and Luby kept it." Ibid. Carroll put the rifle and the money tray in the pantry, R. 45, and, a few hours later, buried the money tray under the house at Waxton's direction, R. 46. On June 4, Waxton and Woodson flew to Newark, where they were subsequently apprehended by North Carolina police officers.

On cross examination, Tucker admitted that he had pleaded guilty to lesser charges "in an attempt to save myself." R. 42. "I was told that I would have to testify against Luby Waxton and I agreed to do that in return for the State Attorney to accept a lesser plea." Ibid. Tucker stated that he "was afraid of Waxton," R. 43, but added that "Waxton didn't threaten any of us," R. 44, to force them to participate in the robbery. Likewise, Carroll testified that "[i]t is true that I have made a trade to save my own life . . . . I agreed to come up here and testify in order to save my own neck." R. 47. He added that Woodson "and Tucker went willingly and did whatever they did willingly," ibid., and that he himself "participated in the crimes on my own; Luby did not make me." R. 48.

At the close of the State's evidence, a hearing was held in the absence of the jury[11] at which petitioner Waxton tendered a guilty plea to charges of armed robbery and accessory after the fact to murder. Petitioner Waxton's counsel stated:

11/Just before this in camera hearing was held, the following exchange occurred after the trial court had denied petitioner Woodson's motion for a mistrial (a motion based on certain discrepancies between Tucker's trial testimony and the summary which had previously been furnished defense counsel):

> "MR. TWISDALE [Solicitor]: . . . Your Honor, I would like to state for the record that Mr. McCormick and I have had several pleading negotiations sessions. I met him at least twice in his office and at least one time up here and I have just as much idea of his client entering pleas Monday morning as I did Max McLeod [Tucker's attorney] or Sammy Stephenson [Carroll's attorney] and I say pleas of guilty.
>
> MR. McCORMICK [Counsel for Petitioner Woodson]: I'm sorry I didn't catch that. Are you saying that we indicated that we were going to plead guilty?
>
> MR. TWISDALE: Yes, sir.
>
> MR. McCORMICK: I'd like to say that I have never stated that to Mr. Twisdale, I have told him that I would make certain recommendations to my client and I have consistently told him that Woodson says he was not guilty.
>
> MR. TWISDALE: I am saying, your Honor, as a result of our discussion I was under as much impression that pleas of guilty being entered in his case as is Sammy Stephenson or Max McLeod until this morning. [sic]
>
> MR. McCORMICK: I did not offer you one did I?
>
> MR. TWISDALE: No, sir, but I said I had the same impression.
>
> COURT: Motions for mistrial are denied and again I'm going to let the record stand for itself on the happenings up until now."

R. 70-71.

"He [Waxton] . . . stated to me that he desired to plead guilty to the same thing Mr. Tucker had pled guilty to and stated that he had -- that he was not any more guilty of anything than was the defendant, Mr. Tucker, and that he did not feel that it was fair or right for Tucker to be given an opportunity to plead guilty without his having been afforded the same opportunity . . . [I]t does appear to me that there would be a basic injustice and inequality in the light of the evidence which has been heretofore presented, and accepting for the moment without admitting that testimony of the defendant Tucker is true in all respects, in the light of [the fact] that it does appear to me that the defendant Waxton could not legally be guilty of any offense greater than any offense for which the defendant Tucker is allegedly guilty, and therefore, to accept such pleas as have been accepted from the defendant Tucker . . . [and not to afford] the defendant Waxton the same opportunity and . . . the same type of pleas . . . produces an inequality and unjust results which I believe our law does not contemplate. I would have to say in all honesty and candor, in the light of the evidence that we have heard up to this point, it would seem to me to be most unjust and inequitable to the defendant Waxton to be subjected to a punishment greater than that to which the defendant Tucker might be subjected under his pleas, if the defendant Waxton, wanted to tender the same kind of guilty pleas which the defendant Tucker tendered, and Mr. Waxton tells me that he does want to tender such a plea."

R. 83, 84-85. Petitioner Waxton was then examined by the trial court concerning his comprehension of the tender and his desire to enter such pleas. The Solicitor, however, declared simply, "I cannot accept the pleas," R. 87, and the trial continued.

Petitioner Waxton testified in his defense, and he gave an account of the robbery that was similar to that given by Tucker and Carroll. He said, however, that he had punched Woodson in the eye because Woodson owed him $3.00 and had declared "I don't have anything," when Waxton asked him for the money. R. 88-89. He also testified that he had never owned a derringer, that Tucker

carried a pistol in his pocket on the night of the robbery, and that Tucker shot both Mrs. Butler and Mr. Stancil. R. 89, 90. [12]

> "Planning of the robbery began in the trailer park. All of us were giving suggestions of what to do. Tyrone gave suggestions. On June 3 we all of a sudden just came together to rob the store. We all had been talking about it. I am referring to James Tyrone Woodson, Johnnie Lee Carroll, Leonard Maurice Tucker and myself. We had talked earlier about robbing another E-Z Shop on Cumberland Street but then decided not to rob it after someone made the remark there were too many customers coming in and out of that one." [13]

R. 94-95. On the evening of June 3, 1974, "[w]hen Tucker got to my trailer, he said, 'Are you ready to go?' and I said, 'Yes, I'm ready.' We all four agreed we were ready." R. 89. Petitioner Waxton denied forcing anyone to participate in the robbery, and he declared that the four of them split the proceeds of the robbery equally. R. 93.

Petitioner Woodson also took the stand and gave his account of the robbery. He "became addicted to hard drugs", R. 99, in Newark, New Jersey, and had gone to North Carolina with Waxton to break his drug habit.

12/ On direct examination, he testified that it was Woodson's idea to test-fire the rifle before the robbery. R. 89. On cross examination, he stated that "Tucker suggested that Woodson test-fire the rifle." R. 92.

13/ According to Waxton, "[a]ll four of us talked about it [a robbery] and planned it in advance because Johnnie Lee [Carroll] and Tyrone[Woodson] were unemployed. They said they were going to pull a job. I said, 'Why not?'" R. 91.

> "Waxton had mentioned the robbery to me on the morning before the robbery. I never agreed to go along. When he brought the subject up I would not say anything. Most of that day (June 3) Tucker and I stayed together. We made two trips to the store to buy wine. We drank. We discussed the proposed robbery by Luby. Tucker said Waxton had mentioned it to him too. I told Tucker I wasn't going to be in no robbery and he said the same thing."

R. 99. Later that evening, Waxton came to Woodson's trailer:

> "He said, 'Look at you, you are drunk.' Well he cursed, he said, 'M . . . F . . . , look at you, you are drunk,' and I said, 'So what,' and he said, 'So what, you are drunk.' Just like that. And I said, 'So what, I am not going nowhere,' and that is when he hit me. I grabbed my eye and I fell up against the trailer and then I went down. I never hit him. He did not hit me again. He said, 'If I don't kill you M. . . F. . . , Tucker will.' 'Come on and let's go.'"

R. 100. He took the rifle from Tucker and entered the car: "No one forced me in the car. I didn't want to go but, just put it this way, I was scared after being punched in the face and threatened in a kind of way." Ibid.[14] Woodson did not recall any test-firing of the rifle. Ibid. While sitting in the car with Carroll outside the store, he heard one shot, and Tucker came running out. R. 101. He saw Mr. Stancil enter the store but made no effort to stop him; he then heard another shot and Waxton rushed out with paper money in his hand. Ibid. After they returned to Waxton's mother's house, there was no division of the money, and he saw Waxton give his mother "something that was sparkling,"

14/ He later testified on cross examination: "I got in the car of my own free will, I knew there was going to be a robbery, and I knew we were going to the place . . . . No one was keeping me in the car." R. 105.

ibid. (Woodson testified that he had "previously" seen Waxton with a ".22 Derringer, nickelplated, pearl handle", ibid.).

> "We turned on the T.V. and I just turned around and started to mention about him shooting the woman but the woman was the last word I got out of my mouth before he had turned around and hit me in the other eye, and blood started coming out of my nose so I just got up and staggered to the bathroom and washed my face, you know, and went and laid across the bed; and after he hit me he told me never in my life to mention that woman's name again, ever. Said he did not want to hear no more about what happened."

R. 101-102. Petitioner Woodson introduced a signed confession he had given to the police on June 16, 1974. R. 108-114.

The trial court instructed the jury that it could find petitioners guilty or not guilty of first degree murder and armed robbery, R. 120-121, and that it could find petitioner Waxton guilty or not guilty of assault with a deadly weapon with intent to kill, R. 125 or guilty of the lesser-included-offense of assault with a deadly weapon with intent to inflict serious injury. Because the State had proceeded on the theory that petitioner Woodson was an aider and abettor in the robbery,[15] the trial court instructed

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15/ "The State proceeds on the theory in this case that the defendant Waxton committed murder or killed Mrs. Butler while in the perpetration of a robbery of the place of business where she worked and that he is thereby guilty of murder in the first degree, and it contends that the defendant Woodson was an aider and abettor in the robbery being committed and that murder having been committed in the perpetration of a robbery and he being an aider and abettor, then he is guilty of murder in the first degree equally with the defendant Waxton." R. 120-121.

the jury that "you cannot find Tyrone Woodson guilty of an offense unless you have also found Luby Waxton guilty of that offense, the same offense." R. 145. The trial court also instructed that the jury might find petitioner Woodson not guilty of any offense if it found that he had committed criminal acts under coercion and duress.[16/]

The jury found both petitioners guilty of first degree murder and armed robbery, and it found petitioner Waxton guilty of assault with a deadly weapon with intent to kill. On June 26, 1975, the Supreme Court of North Carolina affirmed petitioners' convictions and sentences.[17/]

16/ "So, recognizing that the State must prove beyond a reasonable doubt that the conduct of Woodson was willfully, that is of his own free will, he did acts which constituted violations of the law with which he is charged, if you believe that he was under a well-founded fear of death or serious bodily harm, immediate eminent [sic] and impending at the hands of Luby Waxton such as to cause him to go when he would not have gone to render assistance or be ready to render assistance when he would not have otherwise done so in the commission of an armed robbery, then under those circumstances Woodson would not be guilty of the armed robbery because he would not have acted of his own free will and willfully; but mere persuasion by another person or a lack of strong will or fear of slight or remote injury is not enough to excuse a criminal act . . . . The defendant Woodson contends that he was coerced by reason of all the background and circumstances of his knowledge of Waxton, his authority over him and his power, the assault on him this day and knowledge of other assaults that he had committed, that he reasonably apprehended eminent [sic] danger of death or great bodily harm at Waxton's hands if he did not go along and take whatever part he took, and under those circumstances he contends he was coerced and was not guilty of either robbery or any killing which might have resulted from the robbery. The defendant Woodson contends that at most he was merely present. As I read to you earlier in the law, members of the jury, mere presence at the scene of a crime does not constitute aiding and abetting, and a person may be present even though a criminal act is taking place and do nothing to prevent it without being guilty of the offense charged, but if his presence under all the circumstances is a communication to the other person of his readiness and willingness to assist if needed, under those circumstances he may be an aider and abettor."R.139-140.

17/ On July 10, 1975, Chief Justice Susie Sharp stayed execution of petitioners' death sentences in order to allow a petition for certiorari to be filed in this Court.

HOW THE FEDERAL QUESTION WAS RAISED
AND DECIDED BELOW

Before trial, both petitioners moved to quash and dismiss their indictments for murder "on the grounds that punishment for the same . . . has been invalidated by the ruling FURMAN v GEORGIA, 408 US 238 . . . [and] [t]hat GS 14-17 as presently written violates the Eighth and Fourteenth Amendments to the Constitution of the United States in that it grants discretion to the jury with respect to imposition of the death penalty." R. 19; see also R. 20, R. 25. The motions were denied, R. 20, R. 25. These contentions were renewed in a motion to arrest judgment after verdict, R. 151-153, which was also denied, R. 152. Petitioner Woodson assigned these rulings as error (Assignment of Error Nos. 1, 2, 5, 7, 19 (R. 161-164)), as did petitioner Waxton (Assignment of Error Nos. 1, 3, 6, 8 (R. 160-161)). The North Carolina Supreme Court rejected their federal claims succinctly:

> "In the last three years this Court has several times rejected these contentions. They have been thoroughly considered and further discussion would be merely repetitious. See State v. Waddell, 282 N.C.431, 194 S.E.2d 19 (1973); State v. Jarrette, 284 N.C. 625, 202 S.E.2d 721 (1974); State v. Fowler, 285 N.C. 90, 203 S.E.2d 803 (1974); State v. Crowder, 285 N.C. 42, 203 S.E.2d 38 (1974); State v. Avery, 286 N.C. 459, 212 S.E.2d 142 (1975)."

State v. Woodson & Waxton, __N.C.__, 215 S.E.2d 607, 615 (1975), App. A, infra, at 10a.

REASONS FOR GRANTING THE WRIT

THE COURT SHOULD GRANT CERTIORARI TO CONSIDER WHETHER THE IMPOSITION AND CARRYING OUT OF THE SENTENCE OF DEATH FOR THE CRIME OF MURDER UNDER THE LAW OF NORTH CAROLINA VIOLATES THE EIGHTH OR FOURTEENTH AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES .

Although there are now twenty-one cases pending here on petitions for certiorari which challenge the constitutionality of death sentences imposed under the capital procedure mandated by State v. Waddell, 282 N.C. 431, 194 S.E.2d 19 (1973),[18] this is the first petition involving death sentences which arise under the post-Waddell North Carolina death penalty statute, enacted April 8, 1974, effective immediately.[19] Because this statute does not in any way alter North Carolina's capital procedure so as to limit or control the arbitrary and capricious infliction of that State's nominally mandatory death penalty, petitioner incorporates here by reference the arguments and authorities contained at pp. 26-140, Brief for Petitioner, Fowler v. North Carolina, No. 73-7031 (attached as Appendix B, infra) concerning (1) the arbitrary infliction of the death penalty due to prosecutorial charging discretion, plea bargaining, jury discretion, and executive clemency, and (2) the excessive cruelty of the death penalty.

This case, indeed, exemplifies the freakish administration of the death penalty in North Carolina.[20] Four persons were

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18/ Henderson v. North Carolina, No. 73-6853 (filed June 8, 1974); Dillard v. North Carolina, No. 73-6875 (June 11, 1974); Noell v. North Carolina, No. 73-6876 (June 11, 1974); Jarrette v. North Carolina, No. 73-6877 (June 11, 1974); Crowder v. North Carolina, No. 73-6878 (June 11, 1974); Fowler v. North Carolina, No. 73-7031 (certiorari granted October 29, 1974); Honeycutt v. North Carolina, No. 73-7032 (July 9, 1974); Sparks v. North Carolina, No. 74-669 (November 29, 1974); Ward v. North Carolina, No. 74-6263 (March 28, 1975); Lampkins v. North Carolina, No. 74-6673 (June 9, 1975); Stegmann v. North Carolina, No. 74-6735 (June 26, 1975); Gordon v. North Carolina, No. 74-6733 (June 26, 1975); Lowery v. North Carolina, No. 75-5032 (July 7, 1975); Vick v. North Carolina, No. 75-5075 (July 11, 1975); Armstrong v. North Carolina, No. 75-5076 (July 11, 1975); McLaughlin v. North Carolina, No. 75-5077 (July 11, 1975); Woods v. North Carolina, No. 75-5091 (July 14, 1975); Simmons v. North Carolina, No. 75-5262 (August 12, 1975); Young v. North Carolina, No. 75-5281 (August 15, 1975); Vinson v. North Carolina, No. 75-5384 (September 3, 1975); Robbins v. North Carolina, No. 75-5426 (September 12, 1975).

19/ N.C. Sess. Laws 1973 (2nd sess., 1974), c. 1201, §1, amending N.C. Gen. Stat. §14-17 (1974 cum. supp.). There are now eighty-nine persons under sentence of death in North Carolina. Forty-five of these death sentences have been imposed under the State v. Waddell procedure; forty-four have been imposed under the new statute. See Appendix C, infra, for a complete listing of these cases.

20/ The kind of arbitrary discretion in the administration of the death penalty which is exemplified by the present consolidated case arising under the 1974 North Carolina death penalty statute parallels the same sort of discretion that appears in numerous pre-statutory prosecutions under State v. Waddell.

For example, five open murder indictments, sufficient to charge capital first degree murder, were returned against Albert Carey, Anthony Carey, James C. Mitchell, Harold Givens, and Antonio Dorsey for a June, 1973, killing during the course of a service station robbery in Charlotte, North Carolina. The State's evidence, as recounted by the Supreme Court of North Carolina, State v. Anthony Carey, 285 N.C. 497, 206 S.E.2d 213, 215-217 (1974), indicated that the two Careys and Dorsey remained in a car parked near the service station, while Mitchell and Givens went inside to rob it. During the course of the robbery, Mitchell shot and killed an attendant. Mitchell was allowed to plead guilty to second degree murder, was sentenced to thirty years imprisonment, State v. James C. Mitchell, Mecklenburg County Super. Ct. No. 73-CR-61589 (December 17, 1973), and testified against the Careys at their respective trials for first degree murder. Both Careys were convicted and sentenced to death. A nolle prosequi was entered against Givens, State v. Harold N. Givens, Mecklenburg County Super. Ct. No. 73-CR-46182 (August 31, 1973), and Dorsey, State v. Antonio Dorsey, Mecklenburg County Super. Ct. No. 73-CR-47181 (September 11, 1973). The Supreme Court of North Carolina reversed the convictions and death sentences of the two Careys under State v. Britt, 285 N.C. 256, 204 S.E.2d 817 (1974), because the trial court had refused to let defense counsel inform the respective juries that death was the punishment for first degree murder. State v. Anthony Carey, supra; State v. Albert Carey, 285 N.C. 509, 206 S.E.2d 222 (1974). Albert Carey was retried and was

indicted for the capital crime of felony murder, but two (one who went into the store where the killing took place and one who remained outside as a lookout) were allowed to plead guilty to lesser charges. All four testified at petitioners' joint trial and admitted their complicity in the planning and implementation of the robbery: as the North Carolina Supreme Court noted, under the applicable legal doctrines of conspiracy and felony murder, "since each admitted he was one of the four who conspired to rob the shop, legally it makes no difference . . . [who] fired the shot [that killed Mrs. Butler]." State v. Woodson & Waxton, __N.C.__, 215 S.E.2d 607, 615 (1975); App. A, infra, at 9a. The punishments imposed upon the four equally culpable defendants do not, of course, square with this "legal" logic. Instead they illustrate -- if further illustration were needed -- the extra-legal, arbitary administration of "mandatory" capital punishment as practiced in North Carolina and documented in the Fowler brief. "These [two] death sentences are cruel and unusual in the same way that being struck by lightning is cruel and unusual." Furman v. Georgia, 408 U.S. 238, 309 (1972)(Mr. Justice Stewart, concurring).

20/ cont'd.

again convicted of first degree murder and sentenced to death, State v. Albert Carey, Mecklenburg County Super. Ct. No. 73-CR-46178, 61586 (December 19, 1974); his appeal is pending in the Supreme Court of North Carolina, State v. Albert Carey, N. C. Sup. Ct. No. 67, Mecklenburg. Anthony Carey was not retried, however, and the State entered a nolle prosequi on December 19, 1974, State v. Anthony Carey, Mecklenburg County Super. Ct. No. 73-CR-46179.

The North Carolina Legislature has manifestly followed the lead of the North Carolina Supreme Court in preserving procedures that invite juries to nullify the "mandatory" death penalty in sympathetic cases. Codifying the rule of State v. Britt, 285 N.C. 256, 204 S.E.2d 817 (1974), it has provided that defense counsel may inform veniremen on voir dire that a death penalty will be imposed upon the return of a verdict of guilty to a capital crime (N.C. Gen. Stat. §15-176.3 (repl. vol. 1975)), may request the trial judge to instruct the jury that the death penalty will be imposed upon the return of a verdict of guilty to a capital crime (N. C. Gen. Stat. §15-176.4 (repl. vol. 1975)), and may in closing argument in a capital case "indicate the consequences of a verdict of guilty," (N.C. Gen. Stat. §15-176.5 (repl. vol. 1975)).The clear and inevitable result of these statutory provisions, as of the Britt rule, is to invoke de facto jury discretion which undercuts the imposition of North Carolina's supposedly mandatory death penalty in a randomly and arbitrarily selected number of cases.

CONCLUSION

Petitioners respectfully pray that the petition for a writ of certiorari be granted.

Respectfully submitted,

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Appendix A:

State v. Woodson & Waxton, ___ N.C. ___, 215 S.E.2d 607 (1975).

and the Court of Appeals affirmed. Defendant appealed to this Court on the ground that the case involved "a substantial question arising under the Constitution of the United States [and] of this State." G.S. § 7A-30(1). On 29 April 1975 plaintiff filed with this Court a motion to dismiss the appeal on the ground that it presented no substantial constitutional question.

Carl E. Gaddy, Jr., Raleigh, for defendant appellant.

George M. Anderson, Raleigh, for plaintiff appellee.

PER CURIAM.

The sole question presented by this appeal is whether defendant is entitled to a jury trial in a criminal contempt proceeding.

[1] The identical question was considered and answered in the negative in Blue Jeans Corporation v. Clothing Workers, 275 N.C. 503, 169 S.E.2d 867. We reaffirm that well reasoned and scholarly opinion by Justice Huskins. *See also* Codispoti v. Pennsylvania, 418 U.S. 506, 94 S.Ct. 2687, 41 L.Ed.2d 912; Taylor v. Hayes, 418 U.S. 488, 94 S.Ct. 2697, 41 L.Ed.2d 897.

[2] G.S. § 7A-30(1) provides that there may be an appeal of right to this Court from decisions of the Court of Appeals which directly involve a substantial question arising under the Constitution of the United States or the Constitution of this State. However, our decisions interpreting this statute require that an appellant must either allege and show the existence of a real and substantial constitutional question which has not already been the subject of conclusive judicial determination or suffer dismissal. State v. Closon, 274 N.C. 295, 163 S.E.2d 376, cert. denied, 393 U.S. 1057, 89 S.Ct. 676, 21 L.Ed.2d 789.

[3] We hold that appellant has failed to show the existence of a substantial constitutional question which has not already been the subject of conclusive judicial determination, and therefore plaintiff's motion to dismiss is allowed.

Appeal dismissed.

STATE of North Carolina

v.

James Tyrone WOODSON and Luby Waxton.

No. 127.

Supreme Court of North Carolina.

June 26, 1975.

Four defendants were indicted for murder and other offenses in connection with the robbery of a store. The solicitor accepted guilty pleas from two defendants to lesser offenses in return for their testimony. The Superior Court, Harnett County, Henry A. McKinnon, Jr., J., rendered judgment and imposed mandatory death sentence and defendants appealed. The Supreme Court, Sharp, C. J., held that the death penalty statute is constitutional, that the codefendants' testimony was admissible, and that the agreement with codefendants did not violate defendants' constitutional rights.

No error.

Exum, J., concurred and filed opinion.

1. Criminal Law ⇐1169.7

Defendants were not prejudiced by admission of testimony of coconspirators who pleaded guilty to lesser offenses where defendants themselves testified to facts making them guilty of greater offense charged.

2. Criminal Law ⇐508(7)

Testimony of defendants' coconspirators, who pleaded guilty to lesser offenses, was competent.

3. Criminal Law ⇐1213

Statutes providing death sentence for first-degree murder and first-degree rape are constitutional. G.S. §§ 14-17, 14-21.

4. Criminal Law ⇐302(1)

Prosecutor's announcement before trial that State will not seek verdict of greater degree of offense but would ask for verdict of lesser degree is tantamount to taking nolle prosequi or acquittal on charge of greater degree.

5. Criminal Law ⇐302(1)

Shortest and best mode of carrying out promise of immunity is for solicitor to exercise right to enter nolle prosequi.

6. Constitutional Law ⇐250.2(5), 268(8)
Criminal Law ⇐273(3)

Solicitor had authority to agree to accept guilty pleas to lesser offenses in return for testimony against other defendants and agreement did not deny other defendants due process and equal protection. Const. 1970, art. 1, §§ 19, 27; U.S.C.A.Const. Amend. 14.

Appeal by defendants under G.S. § 7A-27(a) from McKinnon, J., 2 December 1974 Special Session of the Superior Court of Harnett.

At the 24 June 1974 Session, in separate bills, defendants, James Tyrone Woodson, aged 23, and Luby Waxton, aged 24, along with Leonard Maurice Tucker, aged 19, and Johnnie Lee Carroll, aged 18, were indicted under G.S. § 15-144 for the murder of Mrs. Shirley Whittington Butler on 3 June 1974. At the same time they were also indicted for the armed robbery of Mrs. Butler on 3 June 1974 and for conspiracy to commit armed robbery. In addition, defendant Waxton was indicted for feloniously assaulting Mr. R. N. Stancil on 3 June 1974 with a .22 caliber pistol with the intent to kill him, thereby inflicting upon him serious injuries, not resulting in death.

At the 2 December 1974 Criminal Session, in exchange for their testimony as State's witnesses against Waxton and Woodson, the solicitor for the State dismissed the armed robbery charge against Carroll and the first-degree murder charges against both Tucker and Carroll. Tucker was permitted to plead guilty to the armed robbery of Mrs. Butler and as an accessory after the fact to her murder. Carroll, who is a half brother of defendant Waxton, was permitted to plead guilty as an accessory after the fact to both the murder and armed robbery of Mrs. Butler.

At the trial, the State's first witnesses were several police officers, whose testimony tended to show:

About 10:30 p.m. on 3 June 1974, a police officer of the City of Dunn entered the E-Z Shop on Fairground Road and found the body of Mrs. Butler, an employee of the shop, lying behind the cash register. She had been shot through the head at close range. The cash drawer had been removed from the register. Lying on the counter were a pack of Kool cigarettes, a dollar bill, a pack of matches, and a box of Cracker-Jacks. In due course, these items were collected and sent to the S.B.I., and Tucker's fingerprints were found on the pack of Kools.

Shortly after the discovery of Mrs. Butler's body police headquarters received a call from Mr. Stancil, who lived just across the street from the E-Z Shop. He reported he had been shot and requested help. The detective who went to his assistance found him bleeding badly and immediately took him to the hospital.

Mr. Stancil testified that about 10:15 p.m. he went to the E-Z Shop and, as he entered, he noticed that Mrs. Butler was not in her usual place. A person, who was leaving in a hurry, said to him something which sounded like, "look out." Almost

simultaneously Stancil heard an explosion and felt pain in his back. He started toward the back of the store but, observing that blood was spurting from his arm, he went home to call for help. A bullet had entered his back, just to the left of his spine, and lodged in his arm. Mr. Stancil never saw Mrs. Butler, and he could not identify the person he saw leaving the shop.

George Willie Carroll (George Willie), the brother of Johnnie Lee Carroll (Carroll) and half-brother of Waxton, testified that about 8:30 p. m. on 3 June 1974 he lent his car to his brothers; that about 10:35 p. m. they had not returned it, and he went to the police station and "reported he wanted his car located." Later that night, George Willie, accompanied by Waxton, Carroll, and Tyrone Woodson, returned to the police station and reported that "the boys" had brought his car back.

Detective Mohiser testified that at 6:00 a. m. the next morning, June 4th, he went to the home of Waxton's mother and requested Waxton to accompany him to the police station. Waxton did so, and after 20-30 minutes Mohiser returned him to his mother's. Immediately thereafter Waxton (so he testified later) arranged with a friend to take him and defendant Woodson to the Fayetteville airport, where they enplaned for Newark, N. J. There they remained until June 14th when Detective Mohiser returned them to Dunn.

On 16 June 1974 at 3:30 p. m., Woodson gave Detective Mohiser the first statement he obtained from any of the four. In it he implicated himself, Waxton, Tucker, and Carroll in the robbery and killing. On the basis of the information he furnished, Carroll and Tucker were arrested. At 7:30 p. m. on June 16th, Tucker signed a confession which implicated Woodson, Waxton, and Carroll. On June 27th Carroll gave the officers a statement, but it was not reduced to writing and signed.

Prior to the time Tucker and Carroll were called as witnesses for the State, counsel for defendants objected to their competency as witnesses on the grounds that they had been indicted with Waxton and Woodson as co-conspirators and principals for the murder and robbery of Mrs. Butler and, if convicted, all would have been subject to the same punishment; that, as a result of "negotiations and plea bargaining" with the solicitor for the State, on 2 December 1974, Tucker and Carroll had been permitted to plead guilty to lesser offenses; that in consequence they were "prejudicial witnesses against Waxton and Woodson," and to permit them "to testify in an attempt to place the blame for the incident" on defendants infringes upon defendants' right to a fair trial; and that, after permitting Tucker and Carroll to plead guilty to lesser crimes, the solicitor's election to put Woodson and Waxton on trial upon a charge for which the mandatory punishment upon conviction is death "is unjust, constitutes an unequal application of the laws of the State and denies them the equal protection of the laws as guaranteed by both the State and federal constitutions."

The court, "being of the opinion that the matters raised go to the weight and credibility of the witnesses and not to their competency to testify," overruled the objections to the competency of Tucker and Carroll as witnesses and permitted them to testify.

Tucker's testimony, summarized except when quoted, is briefed below:

He entered pleas of guilty to the armed robbery of Mrs. Butler and to being an accessory after the fact to her murder in an attempt to save himself, knowing that upon these pleas he could receive sentences totaling 40 years. He first discussed this case with the officers on June 16th, at which time he gave them a statement.

Tucker, a native of New Jersey, came to Dunn on 13 May 1974 and stayed around "without any income, drinking wine, and smoking marijuana." He became acquainted with Waxton and Woodson about two weeks after his arrival in Harnett County. On June 3rd I. and Woodson spent a good

part of the day drinking wine for which Woodson had paid.

About 9:30 p. m. Waxton came to Tucker's trailer. He inquired for Woodson, who was not there, and told Tucker to follow him. In about three minutes Tucker walked toward Woodson's trailer, which was about a block away. As he approached the trailer, he saw Waxton hit Woodson in the face with his hand and heard him advise Woodson that if he didn't join the group either Tucker or Waxton would kill him. Woodson had previously told Tucker that he did not plan to take any part in the robbery. The three men then proceeded to Waxton's trailer, where Carroll gave Woodson a towel to put over his eye. Waxton got a nickel-plated Derringer pistol from a cabinet and put it in his pocket. Tucker took Waxton's .22 automatic rifle from the couch and handed it to Woodson. Waxton and Tucker then got in the back seat of an automobile which belonged to Carroll's brother, George Willie. Woodson laid the gun down in the front seat of the car and got in beside Carroll, who drove the car away.

Waxton announced that they were going to rob the E-Z Shop. A week earlier he had told Woodson and Tucker he was going to rob a place. As Carroll drove by, they saw a customer entering the shop; so Carroll drove a short distance down the road and stopped. Waxton was giving all the orders and he directed Woodson to test-fire the rifle by shooting it into the ground. After he had done so the group then drove back to the E-Z Shop and parked. Up until then, the plan had been that Woodson would accompany Waxton into the store, but at "the last minute" Waxton changed his mind and gave Woodson the duty to cover the front door. He told Tucker to go into the store with him and instructed Woodson to stay outside "and don't let nobody in."

As the two walked to the store Waxton told Tucker to ask for a pack of cigarettes. In the store they saw Mrs. Butler behind the counter, and Tucker asked her for a pack of Kools, which she handed to him. Tucker paid for the cigarettes and moved down to the right of the counter. Waxton then asked for a pack of Kools. As Mrs. Butler handed it to him, he procured the Derringer from his back pocket and fired one shot into the left side of her head. She fell to the floor and Waxton jumped over the counter, took the money tray out of the open cash register, and put it on the counter. Tucker picked up the tray and started to the door. When he reached the door he met Mr. Stancil coming in. He told Stancil "to look out" and continued toward the car. Outside, Tucker heard a second shot from inside the store. He got into the car and Waxton "came out of the store walking fast with some paper money in his hand." The four then went to the home of Waxton's mother. There he and Tucker went into the bathroom and counted the money, about $280.00, which Waxton kept.

From the home of Waxton's mother, the four went downtown to the Shaft Inn. George Willie was there and Carroll went with his brother to the police station. Upon their return to the Inn, Carroll took the others back to Waxton's trailer.

Carroll's testimony, summarized except when quoted, tended to show:

He has lived in Dunn all his life. In June 1974 he was unemployed and living with his mother. Prior to June 3rd he had known Tucker three or four days and Woodson about six months. His half-brother, Waxton, at age 18, left North Carolina and went to New Jersey. Waxton returned to North Carolina in 1974 and thereafter Carroll saw him almost daily. Waxton showed him some of the karate "moves" he had learned in New Jersey. On June 3rd he and Waxton borrowed the automobile belonging to their brother George Willie, who lent it to Waxton "for about 10-15 minutes." About 9:00 p. m. Carroll drove the car to Waxton's trailer. As he approached it, he saw Waxton coming across the field with Woodson and Tucker walking behind him. At the trailer Woodson told him that Waxton had

punched him in the eye because he had been drinking, and Carroll gave him a towel to cover the eye.

Soon thereafter Woodson took a rifle from Tucker and got in the front seat with the rifle in his hand. Both Woodson and Tucker went willingly and did whatever they did willingly. He himself participated in the crime on his own. Waxton did not make him. Carroll drove the car past the E-Z Shop and stopped on a dirt road, where Woodson got out and fired the rifle into the ground twice. The four then drove back to the E-Z Shop. Carroll parked the car and Waxton told Tucker to go into the store with him. They got out of the car leaving Woodson and Carroll sitting in the front seat. Woodson was the first to see Mr. Stancil come across the street. He got out of the car with the rifle but Carroll pulled him back and told him to put the rifle down. Mr. Stancil went into the store as Tucker was coming out with a cash register money tray in his hand. Prior to that, Carroll had heard one shot fired. After Tucker came out and the man went in, he heard one more shot. By the time Tucker got to the car, Waxton came out running with some dollar bills in his hand. He said, "let's go," and Carroll drove the car back to his mother's house.

Back at home Carroll took the rifle from the car and put it in the pantry. He and Woodson sat in the living room while Tucker and Waxton went into the bathroom. About ten minutes thereafter the four went downtown, where they met George Willis. He and Waxton "walked to the police station and get it straight about the car." Carroll then took Waxton, Woodson, and Tucker to Waxton's trailer. Carroll next saw Waxton about 4:00 a. m. on June 4th when he and Woodson came to his mother's house. Waxton told Carroll to get rid of the cash tray, which he had put in the pantry, and Carroll buried it beneath his mother's house. That morning he went with Waxton and Woodson to Fayetteville when Jethro Wynn took them to the airport. Carroll received none of the money from the robbery.

Carroll saw Waxton and Woodson when they were brought back to North Carolina on June 14th, and he himself was arrested on June 16th. On June 4th he had talked to Chief Cobb and had denied that Waxton had anything to do with this case. What he told Chief Cobb on that date was untrue. On June 16th he didn't say anything. On June 27th he made a statement to Chief Cobb after being advised of his constitutional rights.

On cross-examination Carroll testified, "I made a trade to save my own life. I am not trying to put anything on Luby [Waxton]; I'm just telling what happened. I agreed to come up here and testify in order to save my own neck."

Chief Cobb's testimony tended to show that the statement which Carroll gave him on June 27th was in substantial accord with his testimony; that as a result of the information Carroll gave him, he found the money tray buried under his mother's house where he had said it was; that Carroll told him all previous statements were untrue; that he had made no notes on June 27th of the questions he asked Carroll and the answers which he gave, and Carroll signed no statement; that he had tried unsuccessfully to locate the pistol which killed Mrs. Butler.

At the close of the State's evidence defendants moved (1) to dismiss the charges against them because Tucker and Carroll had given certain testimony which did not appear in the "summary of 'Statement of State's Witnesses'" which the solicitor furnished counsel prior to trial; and (2) "if not dismissed then, in any event, a juror be withdrawn and a new trial ordered." The Court denied these motions.

On the ground that the following items were not contained in the summary defendant Woodson then specifically moved to strike the statements (1) "that Woodson took the gun from Tucker" at Waxton's trailer; (2) "that Woodson got out of the car and test-fired the rifle by shooting it

twice on the ground" before the group stopped at the E-Z Shop; (3) "that Woodson had a gun before, during, at and after the robbery while they were in the car"; and (4) that Woodson with the gun attempted to get out of the car to stop Stancil." This motion was also denied.

During the course of the arguments on these motions the solicitor told the court "for the record that Mr. McCormick (Woodson's attorney) and [he] had had several pleading negotiation sessions" and that it was his impression that Woodson would enter a plea on Monday morning along with Tucker and Carroll. Whereupon Mr. McCormick informed the court that he had never stated to the solicitor that his client would plead guilty; that he told him he "would make certain recommendations to his client" Woodson, but he had "consistently told the solicitor that Woodson says that he was not guilty." The solicitor's response was that although Mr. McCormick did not offer him a plea but, as a result of their discussions, it was "his impression" that Woodson would enter pleas in his cases just as Tucker and Carroll had done.

At the conclusion of the foregoing discussion, defendant Waxton, through his attorney, Mr. Johnson, requested the court's permission to make a motion in [illegible]. Whereupon, in the absence of the jury, in the presence of only Judge [illegible], defendant Woodson and his attorney, Mr. McCormick, Mr. Glen Johnson, the solicitor, the court reporter, and a deputy, defendant Waxton tendered to the court a plea of guilty to being an accessory before the fact of murder and guilty of armed robbery, the same crimes to which Tucker had pled guilty." Mr. Johnson explained to the judge and the solicitor that Waxton had said to him "that he thought he was entitled to the same treatment that Tucker received and he wanted to do the same thing Tucker had done." When the court inquired of the solicitor, "What is your position on that?" and the latter answered, "I cannot accept the plea [illegible]

Each defendant testified in his own behalf and offered no other evidence. Waxton's testimony, summarized except when quoted, tended to show:

Waxton, a native of North Carolina, after living nine years in New Jersey, returned to Dunn in November 1973. Woodson, whom he had known for eight years in New Jersey, came with him, and the two lived together in a mobile home park. Waxton met Tucker, also a resident of the park, about two weeks prior to 3 June 1974. Having "talked about it and planned it in advance," Waxton, Woodson, Carroll and Tucker had agreed to rob the E-Z Shop that night. Woodson and Carroll were unemployed. "They said they wanted money; so they were going to pull a job. I said, 'Why not?'"

About 9:00 p. m. on June 3rd, Waxton went looking for Woodson because Woodson "knew we was going to rob the E-Z Shop." He found him at the trailer of his girl friend. Woodson had been drinking, but he was not drunk. An argument ensued. "He said something to disrespect me and I said something to disrespect him; so I hit him." Waxton then left without having mentioned the robbery to Woodson. Woodson followed behind him and, when they got to Waxton's trailer, Carroll was there in Carroll's car. Waxton owned a 1973 [illegible] 1963 Volkswagen, but they [illegible] Willis's car in the robbery. [illegible] from another trailer and [illegible] Tucker was ready to go. Everybody [illegible], and the four left in [illegible] car with Carroll driving. [illegible] Waxton's rifle, which Waxton [illegible] at "to kill snakes."

They then drove by the E-Z Shop, which [illegible] mile from Waxton's trailer, [illegible] dirt road where Woodson [illegible] the rifle to "make sure it [illegible]." After he had fired it twice, [illegible] the E-Z Shop. Woodson [illegible] in the car while Waxton went inside.

Cite as 215 S.E.2d 607

Waxton's version of what happened inside is as follows: "I was about to ask for a package of Kool cigarettes but before I spoke, Tucker asked for a package of cigarettes. After she gave him the cigarettes he shot her. I then jumped over the counter and started getting the money out of the cash register. I got a handful of money and then got afraid so I started running out. As I ran out I met Mr. Stancil and I called Tucker and told him, 'let's go, somebody is coming.' After I got a short distance from the car I heard another shot. I didn't have any gun or weapon at any time there in the store and I didn't have any gun or weapon after I came out of the store. When I heard the second shot Leonard [Tucker] was coming out and we both got in the car. We were not at the Food Store more than five minutes."

From the E-Z Shop the four went to the home of Waxton's mother, where he counted the money in the bathroom. There was $325.00 and he divided it equally. Tucker handed the gun, a nickel-plated Derringer he had obtained overseas, to Waxton's mother and asked her to keep it for him. Later Tucker changed his mind and took the gun with him when they left to go downtown. There they saw George Willie, who told them he thought they had pulled a robbery. When they denied the accusation, he asked them to accompany him to the police station. They went and George Willie told the police he had found his car. The next morning, after Detective Mohiser had talked to him, Waxton and Woodson took a plane to New Jersey, where they stayed until Mohiser brought them back to North Carolina. After he and Woodson had been in the Dunn jail for "a while," Waxton asked Mohiser to bring Woodson over and let him tell the detective "who did the shooting." Mohiser complied with the request and "brought Wood on across the hall to him" and asked Woodson who did the shooting. Woodson said Tucker had done it.

Waxton testified that he told the officers Tucker shot the lady but Mohiser told him he "was telling something that was not true"; that the officers never gave him an opportunity to make a statement before he took the stand; that they only listened to what Tucker, Woodson, and Carroll had to say.

Woodson's testimony, summarized except when quoted, tended to show: He and Waxton were good friends. In November 1973 Waxton had brought him to North Carolina to help him escape the drug habit which he had acquired in New Jersey. At first he had lived with Waxton or his mother and George Willie had gotten him a job. On June 3rd Woodson was living with his girl friend. From time to time Waxton reminded Woodson of what he had done for him.

Waxton had "mentioned" the robbery to Woodson on the morning of June 2nd, but he "never agreed to go along." Woodson and Tucker spent most of the day on June 3rd drinking wine which had been purchased with money Woodson's girl friend had given him. He and Tucker had agreed that they would not be in any robbery. That evening when Waxton found Woodson at his girl friend's trailer, Waxton cursed him and told him he was drunk. When he told Waxton it made no difference because he was not going anywhere, Waxton hit him in the eye and said, "If I don't kill you Tucker will. Come on; let's go!"

Woodson was "pretty high" but he wasn't drunk. He knew what he was doing. He decided to go with Waxton and followed him to his trailer. There Tucker handed him Waxton's rifle, and he got in the car with it of his "own free will." He knew there was going to be a robbery, and he knew Waxton had the Derringer. No one forced him to go. He does not recall testing the gun. On the way to the E-Z Shop was the first time Waxton told him "to watch the front door and not let anybody in." He might have gone in with Waxton if he had asked him. Woodson, however, "was laying back with the towel over his eye, the rifle by his side." When he heard

the first shot from inside the store, he jumped up and saw Tucker coming out the door and Mr. Stancil going in, but he made no move to stop him. Then he heard a second shot. Tucker was outside the building and almost immediately Woodson saw Waxton emerging with paper money in his hand.

From the E-Z Shop the four went to the home of Waxton's mother. Waxton handed his .22 Derringer with the nickel-plated, pearl handle to his mother. He and Tucker had the money. They went into the bathroom and closed the door, but "there was no division of the money . . . at that time." After going downtown and seeing George Willie, Woodson and Waxton returned to the home of Waxton's mother. There Woodson "started to mention about him shooting the woman," but *the woman* was the last word he got out of his mouth before Waxton hit him in the other eye and staggered him. "He told me never in my life to mention that woman's name again, ever."

The next morning, after Waxton returned from the police station, he told Woodson "to get a few pieces" (clothes); that they were going to New Jersey. Jethro Wynn took them to the airport and Carroll went along. At the airport Waxton gave Woodson money from the robbery with which to buy his ticket and then balled up the rest of the money and told him "to hold it." In New Jersey, at the home of Waxton's mother-in-law, he "gave back all the money" to Waxton. When Woodson was later picked up, he returned to North Carolina voluntarily.

Later, in the Dunn jail, Woodson heard Waxton "when he was hollering about making a confession—he wanted to speak to Mohiser." The detective took him over "in front of Waxton," who told Mohiser he knew who shot the woman and that he would tell him where the pistol was if he would pick Tucker up and lock him up. Woodson did not make any statement at that time because he "had already made [his] signed statement." He heard Waxton tell Mohiser "that he did not do the shooting; that it was Leonard Tucker."

As to Woodson the jury returned verdicts of "Guilty of Murder in the First Degree as charged," and "Guilty of Armed Robbery as charged." Upon these verdicts the charge of felonious assault having been merged in the charge of first-degree murder, the court imposed only the mandatory sentence of death.

As to Waxton the verdicts were "Guilty of Murder in the First Degree as charged," "Guilty of Armed Robbery as charged," and "Guilty of Assault with a Deadly Weapon with Intent to Kill Inflicting Serious Injury as charged." Upon the charge of felonious assault the court adjudged that Waxton be imprisoned for twenty years. Upon the murder and robbery convictions, the robbery charge having been merged in the charge of first-degree murder, the court imposed the mandatory sentence of death.

Each defendant appealed from the sentence of death directly to this Court under G.S. § 7A-27(a) and, upon Waxton's motion, we certified his appeal from the sentence imposed upon his conviction of felonious assault for initial appellate review by this Court under G.S. § 7A-31(a).

Rufus L. Edmisten, Atty. Gen., and James E. Magner, Jr., Asst. Atty. Gen., Raleigh, for the State.

Edward B. McCormick, Lillington, for James Tyrone Woodson, defendant appellant.

W. A. Johnson, Lillington, for Luby Waxton, defendant appellant.

SHARP, Chief Justice.

[1] Patently, defendants' motion to dismiss the charges against them and their contentions that because certain items of evidence were omitted from the summaries furnished them by the solicitor are without merit and require no discussion. Each defendant went upon the stand and voluntarily

ly testified to facts which make him guilty of murder in the first degree. As counsel concede, the only significant difference in their testimony relates to who fired the shot which killed Mrs. Butler during the robbery of the P Z Shop; and, since each admitted he was one of the four who conspired to rob the shop, legally it makes no difference whether Waxton or Tucker fired the shot.

"When a murder is 'committed in the perpetration or attempt to perpetrate any . . . robbery, burglary or other felony,' G.S. § 14-17 declares it murder in the first degree. In these instances the law presumes premeditation and deliberation, and the State is not put to further proof of either. . . . Furthermore, when a conspiracy is formed to commit a robbery or burglary, and a murder is committed by any one of the co-conspirators in the attempted perpetration of the crime, each and all of the conspirators are guilty of murder in the first degree." (Citations omitted.) State v. Fox, 277 N.C. 1, 17, 175 S.E.2d 561, 571 (1970).

[2] Had the two accomplices of Tucker and Carroll been incompetent, the testimony of defendants themselves would render their contention that its admission constituted prejudicial error. However, the testimony of their co-conspirators was competent. "A co-conspirator is an accomplice, and is always a competent witness; meaning of course he is competent *vel non*." State v. Goldberg, 241 N.C. 161, 166, 84 S.E.2d 271, 275 (1954). "It is obvious . . . that in practically every case where an accomplice testifies as a witness for the prosecution, he is induced to do so by a promise, or at least by a hope and expectation, of immunity or leniency for himself, and that the rule which makes an accomplice a competent witness would be of little benefit if he were made incompetent by the mere fact that he had received such a promise.

"In accordance with this view, the courts, both English and American, have held with substantial unanimity that a witness who is otherwise competent to testify is not rendered incompetent by the fact that he has a promise of immunity or lenience for himself." Annot., 120 A.L.R. 742, 751 (1938); *see* State v. Watson, 283 N.C. 583, 196 S.E.2d 212 (1973); annot., 24 L.R.A. (N.S.) 412-413 (1910).

As Justice Barnhill (later Chief Justice) said in State v. Roberson, 215 N.C. 781, 787, 3 S.E.2d 277, 279 (1939), "It bears against the credibility of a witness that he is an accomplice in the crime charged and testifies for the prosecution; and the pendency of an indictment against the witness indicates indirectly a similar possibility of his currying favor by testifying for the State; so, too, the existence of a promise or just expectation of pardon for his share as accomplice in the crime charged. 2 Wigmore on Evidence, 2d ed., 359." *See* 1 N.C. Evidence § 45 (Brandis Rev. 1973).

Judge McKinnon correctly held that Tucker and Carroll were competent witnesses and that their status as co-conspirators testifying for the State bore upon the weight and credibility of their testimony and not upon its competency.

G.S. § 14-17, as rewritten on 8 April 1974 by the enactment of N.C.Sess.Laws, ch. 1201, § 1 provides that murder in the first degree "shall be punished with death." Defendants contend, however, that capital punishment "under the laws of North Carolina [would] violate U.S. Const. Amend. VIII and Amend. XIV, § 1, and N.C. Const. art. 1, §§ 19, 27." In the last three years this Court has several times rejected these contentions. They have been thoroughly considered and further discussion would be merely repetitious. *See* State v. Waddell, 282 N.C. 431, 194 S.E.2d 19 (1973); State v. Jarrette, 284 N.C. 625, 202 S.E.2d 721 (1974); State v. Fowler, 285 N.C. 90, 203 S.E.2d 803 (1974); State v. Crowder, 285 N.C. 42, 203 S.E.2d 58 (1974); State v. Avery, 286 N.C. 351, 212 S.E.2d 132 (1975).

[3] Albeit three members of the Court dissented as to the death penalty in each of the foregoing cases and voted to remand

for the imposition of a sentence of life imprisonment, the dissents were not based upon the premise that the death sentence constituted cruel and unusual punishment or that there were any constitutional infirmities in capital punishment *per se*. On the contrary, the thesis of the dissents was (1) that the decision of the United States Supreme Court in Furman v. Georgia, 408 U.S. 238, 92 S.Ct. 2726, 33 L.Ed.2d 346 (1972), decided 29 June 1972, had invalidated the death penalty provisions of G.S. § 14-17 (and also G.S. § 14-21, G.S. § 14-52, and G.S. § 14-58), enacted in 1949; and (2) that until the statutes which made death the punishment for first-degree murder, first-degree burglary, rape, and arson were rewritten or amended by the General Assembly, this Court could not reinstate capital punishment.

On 8 April 1974 the General Assembly rewrote G.S. § 14-17 and G.S. § 14-21 to provide the death sentence for first-degree murder and first-degree rape. At the same time it rewrote G.S. § 14-52 and G.S. § 14-58 to provide life imprisonment for burglary in the first degree and arson. As to first-degree murders and first-degree rapes committed *after* 8 April 1974, by its rewrite of G.S. § 14-17 and G.S. § 14-21, the General Assembly eliminated the grounds upon which three members of the Court had dissented to the imposition of the death sentence for such crimes committed prior to that date. The felony-murder for which Waxton and Woodson have been convicted was committed on 3 June 1973—56 days after the legislature redeclared the public policy of this State with reference to capital punishment. Until changed by the General Assembly, or invalidated by the Supreme Court of the United States, that policy must stand.

Counsel for defendants, although aware of the *Waddell* and *Jarrette* decisions, as well as the subsequent ones based on them, have understandably felt constrained to repeat the constitutional challenge to the death penalty.

Defendants next contend that since Waxton, Woodson, Carroll, and Tucker, the four conspirators, are equally guilty of first-degree murder it would be "fundamentally unfair" to permit two of them to plead guilty to offenses less than capital in exchange for their testimony against the others. Defendant Waxton, who tendered at the close of the evidence the same plea which Tucker tendered prior to the trial, contends that the solicitor's refusal to accept his plea was an arbitrary exercise of power which denied him due process and the equal protection of the laws. Defendant Woodson, who tendered no plea and contended throughout that he was not guilty, argues that "due process and equal protection" require that he receive no greater punishment than his accomplices could have given under their pleas.

"From the earliest times, it has been found necessary, for the detection and punishment of crime, for the state to resort to the criminals themselves for testimony with which to convict their confederates in crime. While such a course offers a premium to treachery, and sometimes permits the more guilty to escape, it tends to prevent and break up combinations, by making criminals suspicious of each other, and it often leads to the punishment of guilty persons who would otherwise escape. Therefore, on the ground of public policy, it has been uniformly held that a state may contract with a criminal for his exemption from prosecution if he shall honestly and fairly make a full disclosure of the crime, whether the party testified against is convicted or not. (Citations omitted.)" Ingram v. Prescott, 111 Fla. 220, 241-242, 149 So. 369 (1933); Henderson v. State, 135 Fla. 548, 185 So. 625, 120 A.L.R. 712 (1939). For the history of the "ancient modes of practice" when accomplices "turned State's evidence," see United States v. Ford, 99 U.S. 594, 25 L.Ed. 396 (1879); 1 Wharton's Criminal Law and Procedure § 165 (1957); 22 C.J.S. Criminal Law § 461 (1961); 8 R.C.L., Criminal Law § 161 (1915). Notes

18 Am. & Eng.Ann.Cas. 747 (1911); 24 L.R.A.(N.S.) 439 et seq. (1910).

In many states the prosecuting attorney has no authority without the court's consent, to make a binding agreement with one charged with a crime that if he will testify against others, he himself shall be exempt from criminal liability or be allowed to plead guilty to a lesser offense. "In states in which a prosecuting attorney may enter a *nolle prosequi* without the consent of the court, he may grant a witness immunity from prosecution by contract without approval of the court." 21 Am.Jur.2d, Criminal Law § 153, *see also* §§ 514-518 (1965); 24 L.R.A.(N.S.) 442-443 (1910); 18 Am. & Eng.Ann.Cas. 748-749 (1911), annot., 85 A.L.R. 1177 (1933). The courts treat such promises as pledges of the public faith and, when made by the public prosecutor, the court will see that the public faith which has been pledged by him is kept. Camren v. State, 32 Tex.Crim. 183, 22 S.W. 682, 40 Am.St.R. 763 (1893), *see* State v. Hingle, 242 La. 841, 139 So.2d 205 (1962), State v. Ward, 112 W.Va. 552, 165 S.E. 893, 85 A.L.R. 1175 (1932), State v. Graham, 12 Vroom 15, 32 Am.Rep. 774 (N.J.1879); United States v. Lee, Case No. 15,588, 26 F.Cas. 910 (1859), United States v. Woody, 2 F.2d 202 (D.Mont.1924); United States v. Brolaw, 65 F.Supp. 100 (S.D.Ill.1945), annot., 43 A.L.R.2d 281 et seq. (1972).

[4] In North Carolina "[t]he Solicitor is a constitutional officer authorized and empowered to represent the State." His announcement prior to the trial that the State would not seek a verdict of guilty of first-degree murder but would ask for a verdict of second-degree murder or manslaughter is tantamount to taking a *nolle prosequi* or an acquittal on the charge of first-degree murder. State v. Miller, 272 N.C. 243, 245, 158 S.E.2d 47, 49 (1967), State v. Rogers, 273 N.C. 330, 159 S.E.2d 869 (1968).

[5, 6] As pointed out in State v. Lyon, 81 N.C. 600, 601 (1879), the shortest and best mode of carrying out a promise of immunity is for the solicitor to exercise the right vested in him "when, in his judgment, the case calls for it, to enter a *nolle prosequi* and allow the prisoner's discharge, which practically accomplishes the same ends as [a] pardon." The solicitor had full authority to make the agreement which he made with Tucker and Carroll, and we hold that it violated neither the Fourteenth Amendment rights of defendants Waxton and Woodson nor their rights under N.C. Const., art. 1 §§ 19, 27.

As Mr. Justice White said in delivering the opinion of the Court in Brady v. United States, 397 U.S. 742, 90 S.Ct. 1463, 25 L.Ed.2d 747 (1970), "[W]e cannot hold that it is unconstitutional for the State to extend a benefit to a defendant who in turn extends a substantial benefit to the State . . . ." *Id.* at 753, 90 S.Ct. at 1471, 25 L.Ed.2d at 759. In Lisenba v. California, 314 U.S. 219, 227, 62 S.Ct. 280, 285, 86 L.Ed. 166, 175 (1941), Mr. Justice Roberts noted that "the practice of taking into consideration, in sentencing an accomplice, his aid to the state in turning state's evidence can be no denial of due process to a convicted confederate."

In Newman v. United States, 127 U.S.App.D.C. 260, 382 F.2d 479 (1967) the sole question presented was whether it was a denial of the appellant's constitutional rights for the United States Attorney to accept a guilty plea tendered by appellant's co-defendant for a lesser offense under the indictment, while refusing to accept the same plea from the appellant. Both were indicted for housebreaking and petty larceny. The co-defendant was allowed to plead guilty to the misdemeanors of petty larceny and attempted housebreaking; the appellant was tried and convicted of the crimes charged. He contended that the United States Attorney's conduct had denied him due process and equal protection in that both "were equally guilty . . . and to permit one party an avenue of escape with relatively minor punishment while refusing the same procedure to Appellant violates the standard of fairness demanded by the

law by the Constitution. . . ." *Id.* at 480.

In rejecting the appellant's contentions Burger, Circuit Judge (now Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court), pointed out that the United States Attorney is charged with the faithful execution of the laws and prosecution of offenses against the United States, and, as such, he must have broad discretion. "To say that the United States Attorney must literally treat every offense and every offender alike is to delegate him an impossible task; of course, this concept would negate discretion. Myriad factors can enter into the prosecutor's decision. Two persons may have committed what is precisely the same legal offense but the prosecutor is not compelled by law, duty or tradition to treat them the same as to charges. On the contrary, he is expected to exercise discretion and common sense to the end that if, for example, one is a young first offender and the other older, with a criminal record, or one played a lesser and the other a dominant role, one the instigator and the other a follower, the prosecutor can and should take such factors into account; no court has any jurisdiction to inquire into or review his decision." *Id.* at 481-482.

"Mere selectivity in prosecution creates no constitutional problems. Oyler v. Boles, 368 U.S. 448, 456, 82 S.Ct. 501, 7 L.Ed.2d 446 (1962). To involve the defense [denial of equal protection under the Fourteenth Amendment] one must prove that the selection was deliberately based on an unjustifiable standard, such as race, religion, or other arbitrary classification." United States v. Steele, 461 F.2d 1148, 1151 (9th Cir. 1972). *See* Comment, The Right to Nondiscriminatory Enforcement of State Penal Laws, 61 Col.L.Rev. 1168, 1119-1120 (1961).

In this case we perceive no possible constitutional infirmity in the solicitor's selection, no abuse of discretion, and no arbitrary classification. All four of the defendants are black and their religious views are undisclosed. The evidence that Waxton planned and directed the robbery and that he fired the shots which killed Mrs. Butler and wounded Mr. Stancil is overwhelming. No extenuating circumstances gave the solicitor any incentive to accept the plea he tendered at the close of the State's evidence.

Woodson at no time tendered to the State a plea of any kind. Throughout the trial he contended that he was innocent because he had acted under duress from Waxton. It is not surprising that the jury rejected this defense in view of his testimony that on the night of the robbery he knew what he was doing; that he got into the car of his own free will after having known all day that "there was going to be a robbery"; that he had not seen Waxton during the day and "he could have gone anywhere if he had desired to do so"; that his staying in the car with the rifle outside the E Z Shop and Carroll's driving the car "was just as much a part of the plan as was Waxton's and Tucker's going into the store." *See* 21 Am.Jur.2d, Criminal Law § 169 (1965).

We note, however, the learned and painstaking trial judge fully instructed the jury on coercion as an excuse for crime and gave Woodson the full benefit of his contention that he went with the group to rob the E Z Shop under compulsion from Waxton. The jury were instructed that if Woodson went along and did what he did only because of a well-founded fear of immediate death or great bodily harm at the hands of Waxton he would not be guilty of any crime.

Finally, we note that Waxton and Woodson were adults, aged 24 and 25 respectively. Tucker and Carroll were still in their teens, aged 18 and 19 respectively. Carroll was obviously impressed by Waxton, his older brother who, after an absence of eight years, had returned from New Jersey with a knowledge of karate and much other information he was no doubt willing to impart to a younger brother willing to learn. We find no evidence that the solicitor's selection was deliberately based on an unjustifiable standard.

We have considered the entire record in this case, as well as each defendant's assignments of error, with care commensurate with the gravity of the sentences from which defendants appeal, and in the trial below we find

No Error.

EXUM, Justice (concurring):

This is the first case, since my joining the Court, in which we have considered the application of the death sentence pursuant to Chapter 1201, 1973 Session Laws, ratified April 8, 1974, codified as G.S. § 14-17, which makes first degree murder committed after April 8, 1974, punishable by death. All capital cases heretofore considered in which I have participated involved crimes committed before April 8, 1974. Death sentences in these cases have been affirmed by a majority of the Court on the authority of State v. Waddell, 282 N.C. 431, 194 S.E.2d 18 (1973). I have dissented in each of these cases from that portion of the opinion sustaining the death sentence not on the ground that such a sentence was violative of the Cruel and Unusual Punishment Clauses of the Constitutions of the United States and North Carolina, but on the ground that only the Legislature and not the Court had authority to reinstate the death penalty in North Carolina after our State's statutory scheme for imposing it had been invalidated by Furman v. Georgia, 408 U.S. 238, 92 S.Ct. 2726, 33 L.Ed.2d 346 (1972). For my dissent in State v. Williams, 286 N.C. 344, 212 S.E.2d 132 (1975).

By enactment of Chapter 1201, 1973 Session Laws, effective on April 8, 1974, the North Carolina General Assembly did reinstate the death penalty for the crime of first degree murder and the newly created crime of first degree rape. Consequently, for me, the question of the constitutionality of imposing sentence of death for conviction of first degree murder, the punishment by legislative enactment is for the first time squarely presented.

It is not an easy question for I am personally opposed to capital punishment. Maintaining it, even for murder, is not in my view wise public policy. I do not believe, however, that its infliction upon one convicted of premeditated murder or murder committed in the course of another felony which itself is inherently dangerous to human life, such as we have here, contravenes the Constitution of the United States or North Carolina.

My belief that capital punishment is unwise as a matter of public policy is based primarily on the proposition that government, if it functions properly, should seek to set an example, to teach the people whom it serves. People ought be able to look to the basic underlying policies of government and see there what is inherently right and proper. I agree with Mr. Justice Brandeis who once wrote: "Our Government is the potent, the omnipresent teacher. For good or for ill, it teaches the whole people by its example." Olmstead v. United States, 277 U.S. 438, 485, 48 S.Ct. 564, 575, 72 L.Ed. 944, 970 (1928). The cold, calculated, premeditated taking of human life is an act the brutality of which is not diminished because it is sponsored by the state. We rightly abhor the kind of human being who commits such an act. That the state should respond in kind is, to me, equally abhorrent. The argument that we sanction, exalt human life by executing those wretches who murder and rape is full of its own weight. Calculated killings by individuals without doubt disregard the God-given right to live. So, however, do calculated executions at the hands of the state. Executions are bad examples; they teach, not respect for life, but that some lives are not worth maintaining. It is a short step in the minds of many from execution at the hand of the state to murders and other violence at the hand of people. As Mr. Justice Stewart wrote in his concurring opinion in *Furman*, 408 U.S. at 309, 92 S.Ct. at 2760, 33 L.Ed.2d at 388:

"The penalty of death differs from all other forms of criminal punishment, not

in degree but in kind. It is unique in its rejection of rehabilitation of the convict as a basic purpose of criminal justice. *And it is unique, finally, in its absolute renunciation of all that is embodied in our concept of humanity.*" (Emphasis supplied.)

Neither do I believe that capital punishment, even when regularly utilized, deters generally the commission of capital crimes. Practically all of the statistical data available on the subject has been collected and much of it thoroughly analyzed in Bowers, Executions in America (D. C. Heath and Company, 1974) (hereinafter, Bowers). The author concludes:

"To assess the deterrent effects of capital punishment, investigators have conducted studies of various descriptions—examining and comparing nations and jurisdictions within nations for the effects of abolition and other changes in the status of the death penalty, for the effects of fluctuations in and the cessation of executions, and for the impact of the death sentence and the execution in specific cases. Not one of these studies has turned up evidence that the death penalty is superior as a deterrent to punishments used as alternatives. The data presented in Chapters 5 and 6 specifically restrict claims for the deterrent power of the death penalty by showing that the experimental abolition of capital punishment, the nationwide moratorium on executions, and the move from mandatory to discretionary capital punishment, did not encourage or contribute to a rise in criminal homicide.

"The failure of the death penalty to display any unique deterrent effect has been attributed to the fact that it had come to be imposed almost exclusively for irrational actions and that even for such conduct it was unlikely to be imposed. Murder and rape are typically committed in rage, drunkenness, and/or stupefying passion. The offender acts in madness or out of hatred, because of insult or betrayal, without expecting to be caught, or not caring if he is. While the objective likelihood of being put to death for his crime is quite low, it is doubtful that the capital offender is subjectively aware of his chances of escaping execution. Thus, even under the mandatory death penalty, which presumably contributes to the impression that offenders are certain to be executed if caught, potential offenders appear equally oblivious to such impending doom." *Id.* at 193-94.

Bowers has carefully compared homicide rates for an equal period of time before and after 1967 (the year of the last execution in the United States) in death penalty and contiguous abolition states. These comparisons make a convincing case that neither utilization of capital punishment mandatorily or in a discretionary way nor its *de jure* nor *de facto* abolition has had any appreciable effect on the rate of commission of capital crimes. See also Furman v. Georgia, *supra* at 348-54, 92 S.Ct. 2726, 33 L.Ed.2d at 412-415 (Mr. Justice Marshall concurring).

It must be conceded that the raw data available has shortcomings which reduce its probative value. "One is that there are no accurate figures for capital murders; there are only figures on homicides and they, of course, include non-capital killings." *Id.* at 349-50, 92 S.Ct. at 2783, 33 L.Ed.2d at 412-13 (Mr. Justice Marshall concurring). The main shortcoming of the statistical arguments is:

"'Capital punishment has obviously failed as a deterrent when a murder is committed. We can number its failures. But we cannot number its successes. No one can ever know how many people have refrained from murder because of the fear of being hanged.' This is the nub of the problem . . . ." *Id.* at 347, 92 S.Ct. at 2781, 33 L.Ed.2d at 411 (Mr. Justice Marshall concurring).

Deterrence, however, is not the only purpose of sanctions against criminal activity. Retribution has long been recognized by

many as another valid purpose. Chief Justice Burger pointed out in his dissent in *Furman*, "The Court has consistently assumed that retribution is a legitimate dimension of the punishment of crimes." 408 U.S. at 394, 92 S.Ct. at 2806, 33 L.Ed.2d at 439. I, personally, do not believe that retribution has any legitimate place in our criminal justice system. My view is that the goals of sanctions against criminal conduct should be general deterrence to others, special deterrence to the offender himself, restitution to the victim, and rehabilitation of the offender. Punishment in the sense of retribution, vengeance, or retaliation is always in the long run self-defeating:

"But the punitive attitude persists. And just so long as the spirit of vengeance has the slightest vestige of respectability, so long as it pervades the public mind and infuses its evil upon the statute books of the law, we will make no headway toward the control of crime. We cannot assess the most appropriate and effective penalty so long as we seek to inflict retaliatory pain." Menninger, The Crime of Punishment 218 (The Viking Press 1968).

Many disagree. "[R]esponsible legal thinkers of widely varying persuasions have debated the sociological and philosophical aspects of the retribution question for generations, neither side being able to convince the other." Furman v. Georgia, *supra* at 394-95, 92 S.Ct. at 2806, 33 L.Ed.2d at 439 (Chief Justice Burger dissenting). While the extent of retribution available is certainly limited by the Cruel and Unusual Punishment Clauses in our state and federal constitutions, in the case now under consideration exaction of the death penalty in a purely retributive sense, while offensive to me personally, does not contravene these constitutional prohibitions.

The point is that as a judge I cannot substitute my personal will for that of the Legislature merely because I disagree with its chosen policy. The utility of capital punishment as a sanction against first degree murder in our scheme of criminal justice is one upon which reasonable, learned, humane, and conscientious persons differ. These differences are nowhere better documented than in the nine separate opinions filed by the Chief Justice and Associate Justices of the United States Supreme Court in *Furman* and the various authorities relied on in each of the opinions. Whether the effects of capital punishment in a murder case are, indeed, brutalizing or salutary, whether the data available tending to negate the deterrent effect of capital punishment really outweighs arguments in its favor resting on "logical hypotheses devoid of evidentiary support, but persuasive nonetheless," Furman v. Georgia, *supra* at 347, 92 S.Ct. at 2781, 33 L.Ed.2d at 411 (Mr. Justice Marshall concurring), and whether in a murder case it should be permitted for purposes of pure retribution are questions upon which honest persons conscientiously and deeply differ. This aspect of the question strongly militates in favor of judicial deference to the legislative will in the case now before us.

I fervently hope that someday North Carolina will join her ten sister states who have legislatively totally abolished capital punishment and some forty-five civilized countries throughout the world who likewise have abolished it (except, in some instances, in time of martial law and "for certain extraordinary civil offenses"). Bowers at 6, 178. The Constitutions of the United States and North Carolina in my view do not require her to do so in cases such as this one.

Appendix B:

Pp. 26-140, Brief for petitioner, Fowler v. North Carolina, No. 73-7031.

intractable judgment is to be made in numerous covert ways which conceal while increasing the irregularity, irrationality, and irresponsibility of the life-or-death decisions. (*See* Part II, pp. 26-101 *infra.*) Moreover, the historical lesson learned through decades of overtly discretionary capital sentencing – that the death penalty is no longer "widely accepted,"[32] but is instead resoundingly repudiated by the institutions of criminal justice that have actually borne the terrible responsibility for choosing between life and death as the disposition for even the most heinous of offenders (*see* Part III, pp. 102-140 *infra*) – is to be ignored, as though it never happened. With all respect, this result is heedless of *Furman*, heedless of reality and history, and forbidden by the Eighth and Fourteenth Amendments.

II.

THE ARBITRARY INFLICTION OF DEATH

Although the prevailing *Furman* opinions differ somewhat in regard to the questions left unanswered by the square holding of that case, each opinion condemns at least any system of capital punishment in which some persons are chosen to live and others identically situated are consigned to die by irregular and erratic

[32] *Trop v. Dulles*, 356 U.S. 86, 99 (1958) (plurality opinion of Chief Justice Warren).

selective processes.[33] *Furman* thus accords contemporary recognition to a central historic concern of the

[33] The concurring opinions of Mr. Justice Brennan (408 U.S. at 257-306) and Mr. Justice Marshall (408 U.S. at 314-373) shared the view that the death penalty is unconstitutional *per se* regardless of the presence or absence of selectivity in the procedural system through which it is administered.

Mr. Justice Douglas did not reach the question "[w]hether a mandatory death penalty would . . . be constitutional" if it were in fact applied wholly non-selectively, 408 U.S. at 257, but held the death sentences under review in *Furman* and companion cases incompatible "with the idea of equal protection of the laws that is implicit in the ban on 'cruel and unusual' punishments," *ibid.*, because they were "imposed pursuant to a procedure that gives room for the play of . . . prejudices," 408 U.S. at 242, and allows the application of capital punishment "selectively to minorities whose numbers are few, who are outcasts of society, and who are unpopular, but whom society is willing to see suffer though it would not countenance general application of the same penalty across the board." 408 U.S. at 245.

Mr. Justice Stewart found it "unnecessary to reach the ultimate question" whether "the infliction of the death penalty is constitutionally impermissible in all circumstances," 408 U.S. at 306, since he found that the death sentences under review were returned "under legal systems that permit this unique penalty to be . . . wantonly and . . . freakishly imposed," 408 U.S. at 310, and therefore violated the Eighth and Fourteenth Amendments. "[O]f all of the people convicted of rapes and murders . . ., many just as reprehensible as these, the petitioners are among a capriciously selected random handful upon whom the sentence of death has in fact been imposed." 408 U.S. at 309-310 (footnote ommitted).

Mr. Justice White declined to consider the question whether "the death penalty is unconstitutional *per se*," 408 U.S. at 311, and held only that capital punishment was unconstitutional when it "is exacted with great infrequency even for the most atrocious crimes and . . . [when] there is no meaningful basis for distinguishing the few cases in which it is imposed from the many cases in which it is not." 408 U.S. at 313.

Eighth Amendment: "that government by the people, instituted by the Constitution, ... not imitate the conduct of arbitrary monarchs." *Weems v. United States*, 217 U.S. 349, 376 (1910).

As this Court has recognized,[34] the Cruel and Unusual Punishments Clause of the Eighth Amendment is derived from the almost identically worded Tenth Clause of the English Bill of Rights of 1689.[35] The preamble to the Bill of Rights declared that James II had endeavored to "subvert" the "laws and liberties of this kingdom" by arbitrarily "assuming and exercising a power of dispensing with and suspending of laws and the execution of laws, without consent of parliament."[36] The first two Clauses accordingly declared such conduct on the part of the King and the royal

[34] *In re Kemmler*, 136 U.S. 436, 446 (1890).

[35] Modern historical scholarship lends support to this conclusion. *See* SCHWARTZ, THE BILL OF RIGHTS: A DOCUMENTARY HISTORY 41 (1971). The "Declaration of Rights," which William and Mary signed on February 13, 1689, before their coronation, was reenacted with minor additions as a statute (the "Bill of Rights") by Parliament later that year. 1 W. & M., sess. 2, ch. 2 (1689), VI STAT. OF THE REALM 142-145. *See also* 5 PARL. HIST. ENG. 483-490 (1688-1704) (Cobbett ed. 1809); BROWNING, ENGLISH HISTORIC DOCUMENTS 1660-1714 122-128 (1953); BAXTER, BASIC DOCUMENTS OF ENGLISH HISTORY 159 (1968). Clause 10 provides: "That excessive bail ought not to be required, nor excessive fines imposed; nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted." 5 PARL. HIST. ENG. 485 (1688-1704) (Cobbett ed. 1809). The Eighth Amendment provides: "Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted."

[36] Of particular concern to Parliament was James II's claim that the royal prerogative authorized him to ignore the statutes prescribing religious qualifications for the holding of public office, 4 THOMSON, A CONSTITUTIONAL HISTORY OF ENGLAND, 1642-1801 87, 89 (1938), and to imprison subjects when no statute or common law principle authorized such a punishment, 2 MACAULAY, THE HISTORY OF ENGLAND FROM THE ACCESSION OF JAMES II 515 (1850). This royal claim was facilitated by the 1686 decision of the King's Bench in *Godden v. Hales*, 2 Show. K.B. 475, 89 Eng. Rep. 1050, 11 Howell St. Tr. 1197 (Trinity Term, 2 Jac. 2) (1686), a collusive action arranged by James II before handpicked judges to secure judicial approval of the royal power arbitrarily to disregard the enactments of Parliament. KENYON, THE STUART CONSTITUTION, 1603-1688 420-426 (1966). The Court ruled: "That the laws of England are the King's laws, That therefore it is an inseparable prerogative in the Kings of England to dispense with penal laws in particular cases and upon particular reasons, That of those reasons and those necessities the King himself is the sole judge." 11 Howell St. Tr. at 1199. This decision confirmed the Parliamentary belief "that the Crown must be limited, controlled, and [made] inferior to the laws of the land," HUGHES & FRIES, CROWN AND PARLIAMENT IN TUDOR–STUART ENGLAND 291 (1959); the realization by both Whigs and Tories "of the inadequacy of the laws of Parliament to withstand the attacks of the King was the beginning of their rejection of James and the real commencement of the revolution of 1688." *Id.* at 294.

judges illegal,[37] and Clause 10 prohibited the infliction of "cruel and unusual punishments." The legislative history of this provision makes clear that it was intended to prohibit the infliction of harsh punishments that were arbitrarily imposed.[38]

While the Bill of Rights was pending in Parliament, an Anglican clergyman, Titus Oates, appealed his 1685 perjury conviction to the House of Lords. Oates had

[37] These two Clauses flatly overruled *Godden v. Hales*, *supra* note 36, declaring:

> "1. That the pretended power of suspending of laws, or the execution of laws, by regal authority, without consent of parliament, is illegal. 2. That the pretended power of dispensing with laws, or the execution of laws, by regal authority, as it hath been assumed and exercised of late, is illegal."

5 PARL. HIST. ENG. 485 (1688-1704) (Cobbett ed. 1809). A significant new phrase was also added to the Coronation Oath: henceforth, the ascending monarch was to swear to govern according to "the statutes in Parliament agreed upon, and the laws and customs of the same." WILLIAMS, THE EIGHTEENTH–CENTURY CONSTITUTION, 1688-1815: DOCUMENTS AND COMMENTARY 3, 37 (1960). "The oath in its previous form had pledged the King to 'grant and keep' the laws and customs 'granted' by his predecessor. If the laws were merely the King's grants, then it might be contended that he could revoke them. Henceforth, it was plain that he was bound by the laws." 4 THOMSON, A CONSTITUTIONAL HISTORY OF ENGLAND, 1642-1801 176-177 (1938).

[38] Granucci, *"Nor Cruel and Unusual Punishments Inflicted:" The Original Meaning*, 57 CALIF. L. REV. 839, 859 (1969); Wheeler, *Toward a Theory of Limited Punishment: An Examination of the Eighth Amendment*, 24 STAN. L. REV. 838, 844 (1972).

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been convicted in the King's Bench of giving false testimony during the "Popish Plot" trials of 1678-1679, and had been sentenced to be defrocked, to serve a term of life imprisonment, to pay a large fine, to be twice severely whipped, and to be pilloried four times a year.[39] This punishment was harsh,[40] discriminatory and arbitrary in the extreme – a manifest attempt to avenge Oates' anti-Catholic intrigues against James II (who had then been Duke of York) by the imposition of punishments that were both unauthorized by statute and outside the jurisdiction of the sentencing court.[41]

[39] For discussions of this phase of the *Oates* case, see CLARK, THE LATER STUARTS, 1660-1714 88-92 (1934); BROWNING, ENGLISH HISTORICAL DOCUMENTS, 1660-1714 12-15 (1953); 4 THOMSON, A CONSTITUTIONAL HISTORY OF ENGLAND, 1642-1801 61-65 (1938); LANDON, THE TRIUMPH OF THE LAWYERS: THEIR ROLE IN ENGLISH POLITICS, 1678-1689 181-183 (1969).

[40] The lengthy flogging prescribed for Oates was apparently intended to be fatal: "the court, having no power to hang him, plainly intended that he should be flogged to death." 4 THOMSON, A CONSTITUTIONAL HISTORY OF ENGLAND 1642-1801 142 (1938). This was the contemporary understanding of the court's intent. In 1689, the House of Commons resolved "[t]hat it was illegal, cruel, and of dangerous example that a freeman [Oates] should be whipped in such a barbarous manner, as, in all probability, would determine in death." 5 PARL. HIST. ENG. 387 (1688-1704) (Cobbett ed. 1809).

[41] Imprisonment for life could not at that time be imposed for perjury (a misdemeanor), 4 THOMSON, A CONSTITUTIONAL HISTORY OF ENGLAND, 1660-1801 142 (1938); and "[o]nly a spiritual court could degrade a priest," *ibid.* According to Macaulay, "that the sentence [imposed on Oates] was illegal was a proposition that admitted of no dispute." 3 MACAULAY, THE HISTORY OF ENGLAND FROM THE ACCESSION OF JAMES II 308 (1850).

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Oates' conviction and sentence were affirmed in the House of Lords, with thirteen of the Members dissenting strongly on the grounds that these punishments were "cruel, barbarous, and illegal" and "contrary to the Declaration [of Rights] of the 12th of Feb. last . . . whereby it doth appear, that excessive Bail ought not to be required, nor excessive Fines imposed, nor cruel nor unusual punishments inflicted."[42] Oates

[42]5 PARL. HIST. ENG. 291-292 (1688-1704) (Cobbett ed. 1809). This dissent declared:

> "1. 'For that the King's-bench, being a temporal court, made it part of the Judgment, That Titus Oates, being a clerk, should, for his perjuries, be divested of his canonical and priestly habit, and to continue divested all his life: which is a matter wholly out of their power, belonging to the ecclesiastical courts only. 2. For that the said Judgments are barbarous, inhuman, and unchristian. And there is no precedents [sic] to warrant the punishments of whipping, and committing to prison for life, for the crime of perjury; which yet were but part of the punishments inflicted upon him ... 4. For that this will be an encouragement, and an allowance, for giving the like cruel, barbarous, and illegal Judgments hereafter, unless this Judgment be reversed. 5. Because sir John Holt, sir Henry Pollexfen, the two Chief Justices, and sir Robert Atkins chief baron, with six Judges more (being all that were then present), for these and many other Reasons, did, before us, solemnly deliver their Opinions; and unanimously declare, That the said Judgments were contrary to law, and ancient practice; and therefore erroneous, and ought to be reversed. 6. Because it was contrary to the Declaration of the 12th of Feb. last, which was ordered by the lords spiritual and temporal, and commons, then assembled; and by their Declaration ingrossed in parchment, and inrolled among the Records of parliament, and recorded in Chancery; whereby it doth appear, that excessive Bail ought not to be required, nor excessive Fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted.' "

then sought relief in the House of Commons, where his cause was strongly taken up by militant Protestants, who secured passage of a resolution "That Bills be brought in to reverse the Judgments against Mr. Oates . . . as cruel and illegal."[43] Sir William Williams declared during the debate on this bill: "let any man give us a precedent to square with that Judgment. It makes the Judges arbitrary, and hereafter the Judges may be most injurious in punishing."[44] When a deadlock occurred with the House of Lords over a collateral matter,[45] one of the floor managers from the Lords (whose bill gave Oates more limited relief than the Commons bill) admitted that the Oates judgment was illegal but declared that Oates deserved punishment for his libels. A Member of Commons responded:

> " 'Be it so. This bill gives him no indemnity. We are quite willing that, if he is guilty, he shall be punished. But for him, and for all Englishmen, we demand that punishments shall be regulated by

[43]5 PARL. HIST. ENG. 296 (1688-1704)(Cobbett ed. 1809).

[44]*Id.* at 294.

[45]The Commons had also declared that the perjury judgements against Oates were "corrupt." 5 PARL. HIST. ENG. 392 (1688-1704) (Cobbett ed. 1809), and it was this allegation that the Lords would not agree to. *Id.* at 394.

law, and not by the arbitrary discretion of any tribunal.' "[46]

By the time of the framing of the American Bill of Rights, eight States had adopted prohibitions of "cruel and unusual punishments" that were modeled upon

[46]3 MACAULAY, THE HISTORY OF ENGLAND FROM THE ACCESSION OF JAMES II 310 (1850). The floor managers of the Commons bill reported back to the House of Commons on their difficulties in securing an acceptable compromise bill from the House of Lords:

> "the commons had hoped, that, after the Declaration [of Rights] presented to their majesties upon their accepting the crown (wherein their lordships had joined with the commons in complaining of the cruel and illegal punishments of the last reign; and in asserting it to be the ancient right of the people of England, that they should not be subjected to cruel and unusual punishments; and that no judgments to the prejudice of the people in that kind ought in any-wise to be drawn into consequence, or example); and after this Declaration had been so lately renewed in that part of the Bill of Rights which the lords had agreed to; they should not have seen Judgments of this nature affirmed, and been put under a necessity of sending up a Bill for reversing them; since those Declarations will not only be useless, but of pernicious consequence to the people, if, so soon after, such Judgments as these stand affirmed, and be not taken to be cruel and illegal within the meaning of those Declarations–That the commons had a particular regard to these Judgments, amongst others, when that Declaration was first made; and must insist upon it, that they are erroneous, cruel, illegal, and of ill example to future ages. . . . That it was surely of ill example for a temporal court to give judgment, 'That a clerk be divested of his canonical habits; and continue so divested during his life.' That it was of ill example, and illegal, that a Judgment of perpetual imprisonment should be given in a case, where there is no express law to warrant it."

5 PARL. HIST. ENG. 386-387 (1688-1704) (Cobbett ed. 1809). Oates was pardoned by King William before the differences between Commons and Lords were finally resolved. *Id.* at 399.

Clause 10 of the English Bill of Rights,[47] and the federal government had inserted a similar provision into the Northwest Ordinance of 1787.[48] Because early American legal history is so obscure, it is not possible to know exactly what the draftsmen of these provisions intended.[49] However, whatever else such clauses were

[47]Virginia Constitution of 1776, Declaration of Rights, §9 (7 THORPE, FEDERAL AND STATE CONSTITUTIONS 3813 (1909); (*see also* RUTLAND, THE BIRTH OF THE BILL OF RIGHTS OF 1791 35-36, 232 (1955)); Delaware Declaration of Rights of 1776, § 16 (1 Del. Code Ann. § 83 (1953)); North Carolina Constitution of 1776, § 10 (5 THORPE, *supra*, at 2788); Maryland Constitution of 1776, § 22 (3 THORPE, *supra*, at 1688); Massachusetts Constitution of 1780, art. 26 (3 THORPE, *supra*, at 1892); New Hampshire Constitution of 1784, §33 (4 THORPE, *supra*, at 2457); Pennsylvania Constitution of 1790, art. 9, §13 ("... nor cruel punishments inflicted") (5 THORPE, *supra*, at 3101); South Carolina Constitution of 1790, art. 9, §4 ("... nor cruel punishments inflicted") (6 THORPE, *supra*, at 3264). *Cf.* Vermont Constitution of 1777, ch. 2, § 35 (6 THORPE, *supra*, at 3747): "To deter more effectually from the commission of crimes, by continued visible punishment of long duration, and to make sanguinary punishments less necessary; houses ought to be provided for punishing, by hard labor, those who shall be convicted of crimes . . . ."

[48]Ordinance of 1787, The Northwest Territorial Government, art. II (Confederation Congress, July 13, 1787): "All fines shall be moderate; and no cruel or unusual punishments shall be inflicted." *See* 1 U.S.C. xxxvii-xxxviii (1964).

[49]"Legal development is probably the least known aspect of American colonial history. Judicial opinions were not recorded in the colonies, no year books were issued, and the printed materials for legal and judicial history have been so scanty as to preclude the more cautious historians from dealing with this important side of colonial life." MORISON (ed.), RECORDS OF THE SUFFOLK COUNTY COURT, 1671-1680 unpaginated preface (1933).

intended to prohibit, it is unlikely that they were not intended to guard against the arbitrary infliction of harsh punishments. For there is evidence that the colonists were concerned with this issue. In 1635, Governor John Winthrop described the attempts of the Massachusetts Bay Colonists to draft a comprehensive criminal code in order to limit the discretion of the magistrates: "The deputies having conceived great danger to our state in regard that our magistrates, for want of positive laws, in many cases, might proceed according to their discretions, it was agreed, that some men should be appointed to frame a body of grounds of laws, in resemblance to a Magna Charta, which being allowed by some of the ministers and the general court, should be received for fundamental laws."[50] The writings of Blackstone, whose influence on the development of colonial American law was enormous,[51] had echoed the 1689 Parliamentary debates concerning the *Oates* case by stressing the fact that English law did not allow the arbitrary infliction of punishment:

> "it is moreover one of the glories of our English law, that the nature, though not always the quality or degree, of punishment is ascertained for every offence; and that it is not left in the breast of any judge, nor even of a jury, to alter that judgment,

[50] WHITMORE, COLONIAL LAWS OF MASSACHUSETTS 1630-1686 5 (1889).

[51] Granucci, *"Nor Cruel and Unusual Punishments Inflicted:" The Original Meaning*, 57 CALIF. L. REV. 839, 862 (1969). Edmund Burke announced to Parliament in 1775 that almost as many copies of Blackstone's *Commentaries* had been sold in the American colonies as in Great Britain. SUTHERLAND, THE LAW AT HARVARD 25 (1967).

> which the law has beforehand ordained, for every subject alike, without respect of persons. For, if judgments were to be the private opinions of the judge, men would then be slave to their magistrates; and would live in society, without knowing exactly the conditions and obligations which it lays them under .... [W]here an established penalty is annexed to crimes, the criminal may read their certain consequence in that law, which ought to be the unvaried rule, as it is the inflexible judge of his actions."[52]

Finally, the American statesmen who framed the state and federal prohibitions on cruel and unusual punishments in the late Eighteenth Century typically believed that their rebellion against Britain had been justified in order to preserve their inherited English civil rights and political freedoms:[53] "from a purely legal interpretation, the American Revolution itself, as the Americans saw it, was largely the result of England's disregard of the common-law rights of the Colonists."[54] It therefore appears unlikely that they would consciously have

[52] 4 BLACKSTONE, COMMENTARIES ON THE LAWS OF ENGLAND 371-372 (1st ed. 1769).

[53] *See* BAILYN, THE IDEOLOGICAL ORIGINS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION 1-54 (1967).

[54] LEVY, ORIGINS OF THE FIFTH AMENDMENT 337 (1968).

rejected or limited any of their traditional liberties,[55] including the right against arbitrary infliction of harsh punishments. George Mason, the author of both the Virginia Declaration of Rights and the amendments proposed to Congress by the Virginia ratifying convention,[56] stressed the necessity of limiting all forms of American governmental authority by such guarantees of individual liberty:

> "In the declaration of rights which that country [Great Britain] has established, the truth is, they

[55]The legislative history of adoption of the Eighth Amendment is sparse and not particularly illuminating as to the purposes of the Framers. *See* 2 ELLIOT'S DEBATES 111 (2d ed. 1863); 3 ELLIOT'S DEBATES 447-448, 451, 452 (2d ed. 1863); 1 ANNALS OF CONGRESS 754 (1st Cong., 1st Sess. 1789). There is evidence, however, that in certain ratifying conventions, opponents of the Constitution feared that, without a Bill of Rights, Congress would be free to devise whatever criminal punishments it wished and that tortures might be instituted. Patrick Henry, for example, declared to the Virginia Convention: "when we come to punishments, no latitude ought to be left, nor dependence put on the virtue of representatives [in Congress] .... Are you not, therefore, now calling on those gentlemen who are to compose Congress, to prescribe trials and define punishments without this control [a constitutional prohibition on "cruel and unusual punishments"]? .... You let them loose; you do more – you depart from the genius of your country." 3 ELLIOT'S DEBATES 447-448 (2d ed. 1863). There is thus some evidence that the Framers were concerned to limit the discretion of *legislators* to devise punishments, and there is no indication whatsoever in any of the debates that they would have approved an arbitrary freedom on the part of magistrates to impose criminal punishments.

[56]*See* 1 ROWLAND, LIFE OF GEORGE MASON 234-250 (1892).

> have gone no farther than to raise a barrier against the power of the Crown; the power of the legislature is left altogether indefinite ....
>
> But although ... it may not be thought necessary to provide limits for the legislative power in that country, yet a different opinion prevails in the United States. The people of many states have thought it necessary to raise barriers against power in all forms and departments of Government ...."

1 ANNALS OF CONGRESS 436 (1st Cong., 1st Sess. 1789).

The arbitrary infliction of death which this Court condemned in *Furman* and companion cases arose, of course, from various procedures[57] whereby juries (or judges) were given the option to sentence convicted capital offenders to life (or term) imprisonment or death.[58] But – particularly in the light of *McGautha v. California*, 402 U.S. 183 (1971) – it is impossible to read *Furman* as prohibiting only the explicit statutory annunciation of jury discretion to impose alternative sentences of imprisonment or capital punishment. Surely *Furman* and the Eighth Amendment forbid *any* arbitrarily selective imposition of the "unique penalty" of death,[59] whatever the source or mechanism of the arbitrariness. See *Commonwealth v. A Juvenile*, 1973

[57]For a description of some of these variations, see *State v. Rhodes*, _____ Mont. _____, 524 P.2d 1095, 1099 (1974).

[58]*See McGautha v. California*, 402 U.S. 183, 197-203 (1971).

[59]*Furman v. Georgia, supra*, 408 U.S. at 310 (concurring opinion of Mr. Justice Stewart).

Mass. Adv. Sh. 1199, 300 N.E.2d 434 (1973).[60] The particular *method* of selecting some men to die while others in like cases live with "no meaningful basis for distinguishing" among them[61] cannot be thought constitutionally decisive. For the Federal Constitution is not ordinarily concerned with the forms of state procedure, but with their result. *See, e.g., Chambers v. Mississippi*, 410 U.S. 284, 302-303 (1973); *Mempa v. Rhay*, 389 U.S. 128, 135-137 (1967); *Jackson v. Denno*, 378 U.S. 368, 391 n.19 (1964), It "nullifies sophisticated as well as simple-minded modes" of producing unconstitutional consequences. *Lane v. Wilson*, 307 U.S. 268, 275 (1939). Federal constitutional guarantees cannot – as Justice Holmes wrote in another context – "be evaded by attempting a distinction" of form without a difference in substance. *Davis v. Wechsler*, 263 U.S. 22, 24 (1923).

[60]In *Commonwalth v. A Juvenile*, the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court held a "mandatory" death penalty statute unconstitutional under the Eighth Amendment where death was the "mandatory" punishment for a specified crime but discretionary mechanisms existed by which a trial court could avoid subjecting a particular defendant to that "mandatory" sentence. The case involved a juvenile who had been condemned under a statute which made death the "mandatory" punishment for rape-murder. The Court held that when a juvenile could be adjudicated either as an adult for rape-murder (in which case, the death sentence was mandatory, see Mass. Gen. Laws Ann. c. 265 §2) or as a juvenile (in which case no death sentence could be imposed), a death sentence imposed pursuant to the adult "mandatory" statute could not be affirmed, since *Furman* invalidated "*discretionary* imposition of the death sentence." 300 N.E.2d at 442 (emphasis in original).

[61]*Furman v. Georgia, supra*, 408 U.S. at 313 (concurring opinion of Mr. Justice White).

To be sure, *Waddell's* annulment of the North Carolina "recommendation" statute ostensibly made death the exclusive punishment for first degree murder, rape, first degree burglary and arson. But the implementation of the death sentence for this broad range of offenses inevitably required the exercise of vast and uncontrolled selective discretion by district attorneys, trial judges, juries and the Governor in choosing which defendants would live and which would die in cases where the death penalty was potentially applicable after *Waddell*. Language requires that the several practices through which unrestrained and arbitrary discretion infects the administration of the death penalty under *Waddell* be described separately, as we shall do in the following subsections of this brief. But the practices plainly operate cumulatively to produce the kind of extreme uncertainty and unpredictability in the infliction of the death penalty that violates *Furman's* ban.

> "There is . . . danger in treating any one stage [of the criminal justice process] as if it were a self-contained system rather than merely one decision in an ongoing process of interrelated decisions and consequences of decisions. An assumption, explicit or implied, that adjudication is in fact a quasi-automatic, nondiscretionary process, turning solely on matters of sufficient evidence, is a gross oversimplification . . . ."

NEWMAN, CONVICTION: THE DETERMINATION OF GUILT OR INNOCENCE WITHOUT TRIAL 150 (1966).[62] Thus as demonstrated by Professor Charles

[62]*See also* Rosett, *Discretion, Severity and Legality in Criminal Justice*, 46 SO. CALIF. L. REV. 12, 14-15 (1972).

Black in his recent trenchant analysis,[63] the result of

[63]BLACK, CAPITAL PUNISHMENT: THE INEVITABILITY OF CAPRICE AND MISTAKE (1974). Professor Black points out the numerous discretionary decisions made at every stage of the criminal justice process, with life and death consequences, and emphasizes:

> "Regarding *each* of these choices, through all the range, one of two things, or perhaps both, may be true.
>
> First, the choice made may be a mistaken one. The defendant may not have committed the act of which he is found guilty; the factors which ought properly to induce a prosecutor to accept a plea to a lesser offense may have been present, though he refused to do so; the defendant may have been 'insane' in the way the law requires for exculpation, though the jury found that he was not. And so on.
>
> Secondly, there may either be no legal standards governing the making of the choice, or the standards verbally set up by the legal system for the making of the choice may be so vague, at least in part of their range, as to be only *apparent* standards, in truth furnishing no direction and leaving the actual choice quite arbitrary.
>
> These two possibilities have an interesting (and, in the circumstances, tragic) relationship. The concept of *mistake* fades out as the *standard* grows more and more vague and unintelligible. There is no vagueness problem about the question 'Did Y hit Z on the head with a piece of pipe?' It is, for just that reason, easily possible to conceive of what it means to be 'mistaken' in answering this question; one is 'mistaken' if one answers it 'yes' when in fact Y did not hit Z with the pipe. It is even fairly clear what it means to be 'mistaken' in answering the question 'Did Y *intend* to kill Z?' Conscious intents are facts; the difference here really is that, for obvious reasons, *mistake is more likely* in the second case than in the first, for it is hard or impossible to be confident of coming down on the right side of a question about past psychological fact.

(continued)

numerous interrelated arbitrary processes in the administration of the death penalty in North Carolina is exactly the result condemned by *Furman*: death sentences which are "wantonly and . . . freakishly imposed." *Furman v. Georgia, supra,* 408 U.S. at 310 (concurring opinion of Mr. Justice Stewart).

And this means not merely that a few men die for crimes no more atrocious than the crimes of many who are spared.[64] It means also that society's most extreme and irremediable punishment is likely to be practiced principally upon the outcast of society. Discrimination is inseparable from arbitrariness wherever social atti-

(footnote continued from proceeding page)

> It is very different when one comes to the question, 'Was the action of which the defendant was found guilty performed in such a manner as to evidence an 'abandoned and malignant heart'?' (This phrase figures importantly in homicide law.) This question has the same grammatical form as a clearcut factual question; actually, through a considerable part of its range, it is not at all clear what it means. It sets up, in this range, not a standard but a *pseudo-standard*. One cannot, strictly speaking, be *mistaken* in answering it, at least within a considerable range, because to be mistaken is to be on the wrong side of a line, and there is no real line here. But that, in turn, means that the 'test' may often be no test at all, but merely an invitation to arbitrariness and passion, or even to the influence of dark unconscious factors.
>
> 'Mistake' and 'arbitrariness' therefore are reciprocally related."

Id. at 19-21 (emphasis in original).

[64]*See, e.g.*, LAWES, TWENTY THOUSAND YEARS IN SING SING 302, 307-310 (1932); DUFFY & HIRSHBERG, 88 MEN AND 2 WOMEN 254-255 (1962); De Ment, *A Plea for the Condemned*, 29 ALA. LAWYER 440, 440-441 n.2 (1968) (quoting Commissioner A. Frank Lee, of the Alabama Board of Corrections).

tudes make men or groups unequal or unpopular. That had not ceased to be the case in England three centuries after Titus Oates,[65] and it assuredly has not ceased in this country where "[t]hroughout our history differences in race and color have defined easily indentifiable groups which have at times required the aid of the courts in securing equal treatment under the laws."[66] "It is the poor, the illiterate, the underprivileged, the member of the minority group who is usually sacrificed by society's lack of concern."[67] To believe that this discrimination can be ended or controlled by the annulment of forthright jury discretion in capital sentencing in North Carolina blinks reality. For,

> "discretion in the imposition of the death penalty will continue to be exercised in the prosecuting attorney's decision concerning the wording of the charge; the grand jury's decision concerning the

[65]PIERREPOINT, EXECUTIONER: PIERREPOINT 211 (1974):

> "As long as reprieves for the death sentence existed, the reason for a reprieve was always fundamentally political: an execution here would incite too much sympathy for the victim and must be respited; an execution there will show that the Home Secretary means business. The public were allowed to blow like the wind for one popular reprieve of a favourite from Hampstead, and stay dead calm about an unattractive strangling in Ashton-under-Lyne precisely because the same basic inconsistency was being operated for the policy reprieves. The trouble with the death sentence has always been that nobody wanted it for everybody, but everybody differed about who should get off."

[66]*Hernandez v. Texas*, 347 U.S. 475, 478 (1954).

[67]DiSalle, *Trends in the Abolition of Capital Punishment*, 1 U. TOLEDO L. REV. 1, 12-13 (1969). *See also* text and notes at notes 226-227, *infra*.

> allegations of the indictment; the jury's findings concerning the existence of defenses, [and] elements of the crime . . .; and the governor's decision whether to commute the death sentence if one results. Since discretion will not be substantially restricted under the new [procedure] . . ., but merely shifted to other parts of the criminal justice process, there is little reason to expect that disproportionate application to minorities and poor people will not continue."[68]

A. Prosecutorial Charging Discretion

As long ago as 1931, the Wickersham Commission reported that "[t]he Prosecutor [is] the real arbiter of what laws shall be enforced and against whom. . . ."[69]

[68]Browning, *The New Death Penalty Statutes: Perpetuating a Costly Myth*, 9 GONZAGA L. REV. 651, 661-662 (1974). *See also* Note, *Mandatory Death: State v. Waddell*, 4 N.C. CENT. L. J. 292, 298 (1974).

[69]NATIONAL COMMISSION ON LAW OBSERVANCE AND ENFORCEMENT, REPORT ON PROSECUTION 19 (1931). *See also* DAVIS, DISCRETIONARY JUSTICE: A PRELIMINARY INQUIRY 188-214 (1971); authorities collected in note 74 *infra*. *Cf.* MOLEY, POLITICS AND CRIMINAL PROSECUTION vii (1929):

> ". . . I have attempted to indicate the very great importance of the public prosecutor, a fact which is particularly American. The sheriff and the coroner, the grand jury, and finally the petit jury, products of a long historical evolution, have quite faded into insignificance. Likewise, both the examining magistrate and the trial judge in state courts, partially through their own lack of capacity, partly through legal limitations upon their powers, and largely because they have no means for knowing what they should know about the cases before them, perform no dominant role. In the midst of the decay and impotence of his official associates, the prosecutor rises to a definite mastery. To a considerable extent, he is police, prosecutor, magistrate, grand jury, petit jury, and judge in one."

In North Carolina, the prosecuting attorney (called the Solicitor) is charged with the duty to "prepare the trial dockets, [and] prosecute in the name of the State *all criminal actions requiring prosecution* in the superior and district courts of his district," N.C. Gen. Stat. § 7A-61 (1973 cum. supp.) (emphasis added). He is thereby given broad and essentially unreviewable authority to initiate and terminate prosecutions,[70] *State*

[70]A recent death penalty case, where the conviction and sentence were vacated and a new trial ordered because of procedural error, illustrates the Solicitor's charging discretion under *Waddell*. In *State v. Spicer*, 285 N.C. 274, 204 S.E.2d 641 (1974), two persons were tried and convicted for murder during the course of an armed robbery. A third person, one Brailford, had helped to plan the robbery and was to share in its proceeds, but he was not charged in the murder although his testimony "permitted the jury to make a finding that he was an accomplice either in the robbery or the murder, or both." 204 S.E.2d at 647. The Court described Brailford's criminal role in the following fashion:

> "the State's witness Brailford made the admission to the officers, 'I stated that I initiated the proposition concerning the hit of Christian Brothers Poultry. It was my idea.' He again stated he expected his cut. . . .
>
> The evidence discloses that the witness Brailford originated the plan to rob his employer and explained the setup at the plant."

Ibid. The other two persons involved in the robbery, Spicer and one Isaac Monk, were convicted of first degree murder and sentenced to die. Spicer's conviction has been, as indicated, reversed on grounds permitting a retrial and a new death sentence, while Monk's conviction and death sentence are now pending on appeal in the North Carolina Supreme Court. *State v. Monk*, No. 13, New Hanover County, Fall Term, 1974.

v. Loesch, 237 N.C. 611, 75 S.E.2d 654, 656 (1953),[71] including not only absolute discretion whether and what to charge,[72] but also absolute discretion to bring an indicted defendant to trial upon lesser charges than those set forth in the indictment even if the evidence

[71]The Court also ruled in *State v. Loesch*, that the Attorney General had no supervisory jurisdiction over the several Solicitors of the State, whose offices were established by Article III, Section 18 of the State Constitution. "[T]he duty of the Attorney General in so far as it extends to the solicitors of the State is purely advisory. The Attorney General has no constitutional authority to issue a directive to any other constitutional officer concerning his legal duties." 75 S.E.2d at 656.

[72]The grand jury provides no significant check upon prosecutorial discretion since – except in a few extraordinary cases – it is heavily dominated by the prosecuting attorney. *See, e.g.*, Goldstein, *The State and the Accused: Balance of Advantage in Criminal Procedure*, 69 YALE L. J. 1149, 1171 (1960), and authorities cited; Shannon, *The Grand Jury, True Tribunal of the People or Administrative Agency of the Prosecutor*? 2 NEW MEXICO L. REV. 141, 170 (1972); Note, *Private Prosecution: A Remedy for District Attorneys' Unwarranted Inaction*, 65 YALE L. J. 209, 212-213 (1955). Indeed, it is dubious that even the most conscientious grand juror, zealous to perform the grand jury's function of providing " 'a fair method for instituting criminal proceedings against persons believed to have committed crimes,' " *Costello v. United States*, 350 U.S. 359, 362 (1956) (as quoted in *Russell v. United States*, 369 U.S. 749, 761 (1962)); *accord: State v. Greer*, 238 N.C. 325, 77 S.E.2d 917, 918-919 (1953), by inquiring "into the existence of possible criminal conduct and [returning] . . . only well-founded indictments," *Branzburg v. Hayes*, 408 U.S. 665, 688 (1972); *see also United States v. Calandra*, 414 U.S. 338, 343 (1974), would suppose that this function called upon him to return an indictment upon charges *greater* than those sought by the prosecutor. And, as we shall shortly see under North Carolina law, if a grand jury did return such an indictment, the prosecutor could elect not to prosecute the offense charged, but only a lesser included offense. *See* text and note at note 73 *infra*.

shows that a greater crime has been committed, *State v. Allen*, 279 N.C. 115, 181 S.E.2d 453, 455 (1971);[73] *and see State v. Roy*, 233 N.C. 558, 64 S.E.2d 840, 841 (1951).[74]

[73]In *State v. Allen*, the Court affirmed a second degree burglary conviction in a case where the sole question presented on appeal was " 'Did the trial court commit error by placing the defendant on trial for burglary in the second degree when all the evidence tended to show burglary in the first degree?' " 181 S.E.2d at 455. The appellant was charged by indictment with first degree burglary, but at trial the solicitor announced he would seek no verdict greater than burglary in the second degree. The Supreme Court of North Carolina ruled that "the solicitor has the authority to elect not to try the defendant on the maximum degree of the offense charged but to put him on trial for the lesser degree thereof and lesser offenses included therein.... The effect of such election by the solicitor, announced as in this instance, is that of a verdict of not guilty upon the maximum degree of the offense charged, leaving for trial the lesser degree and the lesser included offenses." *Ibid.*

[74]*Cf.* Note, *Prosecutorial Discretion*, 21 DePAUL L. REV. 485, 486 (1971-1972):

> "[t]he limitations of a prosecutor's discretion are somewhat nebulous, and, in general, undefined. He has the authority by law to enforce certain laws by prosecuting offenders. Whom he chooses to prosecute, what he charges them with, whether he charges them at all, whether he later drops the charges or recommends a lower sentence at the time of trial are all within the prosecutor's exercise of discretion."

See also MILLER, PROSECUTION: THE DECISION TO CHARGE A SUSPECT WITH A CRIME 154-172, 293-350 (1969); 2 PLOSCOWE (ed.), MANUAL FOR PROSECUTING ATTORNEYS 315-320 (1956); Baker & DeLong, *The Prosecuting Attorney*, 24 J. CRIM. L. & CRIM. 1025 (1934); Ferguson, *Formulation of Enforcement Policy: An Anatomy of the Prosecutor's Discretion Prior to Accusation*, 11 RUTGERS L. REV. 507 (1957); Mills, *The Prosecutor: Charging and "Bargaining,"* 1966 U. ILL. L. F. 511; Note, *Prosecutor's Discretion*, 103 U. PA. L. REV. 1057 (1955); Note, *Private Prosecution: A Remedy for District Attorneys' Unwarranted Inaction*, 65 YALE L. J. 209, 209-215 (1955).

The North Carolina courts steadfastly refuse to review prosecutorial decisions. The leading case is *State v. Casey*, 159 N.C. 472, 74 S.E. 625 (1912), where an appellant, prosecuted and convicted for second degree murder by poisoning, argued that there was no evidence of this crime; that she was either guilty of first degree murder or not guilty of any offense. The North Carolina Supreme Court rejected this contention, commenting that the appellant had no "privilege to be tried for the capital felony" and concluding that "if the solicitor erred, it is an error in favor of the prisoner, of which she cannot justly complain." 74 S.E. at 625. And following *Waddell*, the court in *State v. Jarrette*, 284 N.C. 625, 202 S.E.2d 721, 742 (1974), flatly rejected the contention that the Eighth and the Fourteenth Amendments required any circumscription of the discretion of the Solicitor in capital cases:

> "the Constitution of the United States does not require a state, in the enforcement of its criminal laws, so to hedge its prosecuting attorney about with 'guidelines' that he becomes a mere automaton, acting on the impulse of a computer and treating all persons accused of criminal conduct exactly alike."

The consequence of this unfettered prosecutorial discretion is, of course, that different Solicitors may utilize different standards in deciding whether to initiate capital or noncapital prosecutions. Without any guidance whatsoever,[75] a Solicitor is free to make the

[75]*Cf.* Wechsler, *The Challenge of a Model Penal Code*, 65 HARV. L. REV. 1097, 1102 (1952):

> "[a] society that holds, as we do, to belief in law cannot regard with unconcern the fact that prosecuting agencies can exercise so large an influence on dispositions that involve the penal sanction, without reference to any norms but those that they may create for themselves."

decision whether an indictment will be sought for first or second degree murder or manslaughter,[76] for rape or assault with intent to rape, for first or second degree burglary. He may thus "without violating [his] . . . trust or any statutory policy . . . refuse to [seek] . . . the death penalty no matter what the circumstances of the crime." *Furman v. Georgia, supra,* 408 U.S. at 314 (concurring opinion of Mr. Justice White). This unconstrained discretion doubtless accounts in considerable part for the striking fact that there have been only three convictions[77] of first degree burglary during a full year of *Waddell's* implementation in a State where there were about forty convictions annually for this crime in

[76]As we demonstrate at pp. 65-76 *infra*, the distinctions among these offenses as they may apply to particular factual situations are largely intangible and judgmental.

[77]*State v. Poole, rev'd for insufficient evidence*, 285 N.C. 108, 203 S.E.2d 786 (1974); *State v. Henderson*, 285 N.C. 1, 203 S.E.2d10(1974), *petition for cert. filed sub nom. Henderson v. North Carolina*, U.S.S.C. No. 73-6853 (June 8, 1974); *State v. Boyd*, N.C. Sup. Ct. No. 7, Spring Term 1974, (pending on appeal). In *State v. Henderson, supra*, the defendant was also convicted of and sentenced to die for rape; and in *State v. Boyd, supra*, the jury was unable to agree on a homicide verdict after it was instructed that it could find the defendant guilty of second degree murder.

the recent past,[78] and where 39,210 "burglaries and housebreakings" were reported in 1972.[79] The conclusion is inescapable that Solicitors have simply not regarded first degree burglary as a crime deserving death, and have not initiated first degree burglary

[78]In 1955, the North Carolina Department of Justice ceased to report separate statistics for persons convicted of first degree burglary and of second degree burglary. In 1952, there were 47 convictions for first degree burglary in Superior Court (with 15 "Other dispositions") and 5 convictions in "inferior court" (with 64 "Other dispositions" there). 32 BIENNIAL REPORT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL OF THE STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA 1952-1954 515, 521 (1954). In 1953, there were 33 convictions for first degree burglary in Superior Court (with 10 "Other dispositions") and 4 convictions in "inferior court" (with 49 "Other dispositions" there). *Ibid.* In 1954, there were 35 convictions for first degree burglary in Superior Court (with 26 "Other dispositions") and 9 convictions in "inferior court" (with 61 "Other dispositions" there). 33 BIENNIAL REPORT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL OF THE STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA 1954-1956 377, 379 (1956). "Other dispositions" is nowhere defined; since the total of convictions and "Other dispositions" represents "cases disposed of in the Superior and inferior courts of the State," 32 BIENNIAL REPORT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL OF THE STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA 1952-1954 510 (1954), "Other dispositions" apparently includes acquittals and *nol pros's*.

[79]UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION, CRIME IN THE UNITED STATES 1972 74 (Aug. 1973). The Uniform Crime Reports, of course, reflect reported crimes, not convictions; and the reported "burglaries and housebreakings" doubtless exceed the total number of statutory first degree burglaries which occurred in the State during 1972. Nevertheless, it cannot rationally be imagined that only *three* first degree burglars were apprehended in North Carolina during a twelve month period.

prosecutions in cases where they might have obtained convictions for this crime.

The inconsequential number of first degree burglary convictions under the *Waddell* regime is hardly surprising, since the exercise of prosecutorial discretion to blunt the impact of "mandatory" penalties in sympathetic cases has been one of the most significant phenomena observed in the enforcement of such statutes: "[a] charge may be reduced to avoid infliction of punishment harm that administrative officials regard as too severe in relation to the suspect's conduct. Usually, a less serious offense is charged because conviction of the maximum offense carries a statutory mandatory minimum sentence."[80]

As with the death-penalty statutes struck down in *Furman*, it is not necessary to conclude that North Carolina's capital laws are being intentionally administered "with an evil eye and an unequal hand," *Yick Wo*

[80] MILLER, PROSECUTION: THE DECISION TO CHARGE A SUSPECT WITH A CRIME 207 (1969). *Cf.* Rosett, *Discretion, Severity and Legality in Criminal Justice*, 46 SO. CALIF. L. REV. 12, 49 (1972):

> "[o]fficials tend to respond to the undue harshness of punishments provided by the law by seeking discretion to avoid the imposition of that harshness in most cases. Yet, ironically, it is when the system is particularly severe that discretion may be most abusive and the temptation to act unjustly becomes greater. When the system is severe, discretionary decision-making becomes unacceptable because it reposes excessive authority in the hands of an often unsupervised individual official. In such a situation, the advantages of legal rules and process become exaggerated."

v. Hopkins, 118 U.S. 356, 373-374 (1886). The point rather is that their implementation is necessarily and unavoidably *arbitrary*. Since no standards exist to regularize the exercise of prosecutorial discretion, there is nothing to guarantee that some defendants, like petitioner, will not be capitally charged while other defendants, probably guilty of similar conduct, are prosecuted for second degree murder or manslaughter. Although the choice of charge is quite literally the difference between life and death, that choice is a completely uncontrolled, discretionary decision of the Solicitor.

B. Plea Bargaining

Another point of entrance for arbitrariness in the administration of capital punishment in North Carolina under the *Waddell* procedures is the unfettered power of the Solicitor to accept a plea of guilty to a lesser or other non-capital offense from a capitally charged defendant, and/or to *nol pros* a capital indictment. Exercise of this discretionary power undercuts the "mandatory" nature of the death penalty for first degree murder as effectively as the practice of selectively charging homicide defendants with second degree murder or manslaughter at the outset. The guilty-plea process is unregulated by law, and the discretion of a Solicitor to accept a plea to a lesser offense in a capital case is therefore quite as untrammelled as the freedom of a jury to recommend mercy in a pre-*Waddell* capital prosecution.

Plea bargaining is pervasive in the criminal justice system; guilty pleas are said to account for up to ninety per cent of all criminal convictions.[81] Indeed, in view of the judicial resources available, the systematic and extensive practice of plea bargaining appears inevitable:

> "[i]f all the defendants should combine to refuse to plead guilty, and should dare to hold out, they could break down the administration of criminal justice in any state in the Union. But they dare not hold out, for such as were tried and convicted

[81] PRESIDENT'S COMMISSION ON LAW ENFORCEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE, TASK FORCE REPORT: THE COURTS 9 (1967). *See also* Coon, *The Indictment Process and Reduced Charges*, 40 N.Y. ST. BAR J. 434 (1968). A study of the indictments for first and second degree murder in Massachusetts between 1956 and 1965 which received a final disposition in terms of guilt or innocence revealed that 221 out of 326 defendants (67.8%) entered a guilty plea and that 93.2% of these guilty pleas were to a lesser charge. Carney & Fuller, *A Study of Plea Bargaining in Murder Cases in Massachusetts*, 3 SUFF. L. REV. 292, 299 (1969). The study concluded that:

> "there is a wide disparity among the courts in terms of the proportion of guilty pleas in murder cases. This finding indicates that the practice of plea bargaining is far from uniform. It also underscores the potential risk inherent in such an informal and invisible process as plea bargaining. For example, a defendant indicted for first degree murder in one court may have a very good chance of negotiating a plea of guilty to second degree murder, while in another court such a possibility may be minimal. The implications of this are serious, since conviction for first degree murder may well result in a sentence of death.... Therefore, it seems crucial that the practice of plea bargaining be governed by specific and explicit guidelines that could be systematically and consistently applied from court to court."

Id. at 307.

> could hope for no leniency. The prosecutor is like a man armed with a revolver who is cornered by a mob. A concerted rush would overwhelm him.... The truth is that a criminal court can operate only by inducing the great mass of actually guilty defendants to plead guilty."[82]

Because homicide cases are likely to take up a great deal of time in preparation and trial, they are particularly likely to be settled by plea bargaining.[83] And the fact that the harshness of a death sentence creates a relatively great risk that a conviction will be reversed on appeal for procedural error provides an additional incentive for plea bargaining in capital cases:

> " '[s]ince time immemorial ... [prosecutors] will prefer to get a definite conviction, without the tremendous expense that goes with a murder trial, the taking of a chance that a jury may not convict, or that some technical error will be made in the heat of trial which will result in a reversal by an Appellate Court.' "[84]

[82] LUMMUS, THE TRIAL JUDGE 46 (1937).

[83] In the words of one prosecutor:

> " 'A murder case ties up a courtroom for a week, or at least for three days. We are naturally more anxious to bargain for guilty pleas in murder cases than we are in cases that might take fifteen minutes at trial.' "

Pittsburgh First Assistant District Attorney James G. Dunn, quoted in Alschuler, *The Prosecutor's Role in Plea Bargaining*, 36 U. CHI. L. REV. 50, 55 (1966).

[84] Bedau, *Death Sentences in New Jersey 1907-1960*, 19 RUTGERS L. REV. 1, 30 (1963) (quoting opinion of Judge C. Conrad Schneider, *State v. Faison*, No. 5-550-57, Bergen Cty. Ct., Nov. 21, 1958).

Plea bargaining almost inevitably involves a reduction in charge or sentence: "[a] promise by the prosecutor of sentence leniency or a charge reduction as a concession for a plea of guilty is a major characteristic of the negotiated plea process."[85] This Court is not unfamiliar with guilty pleas to lesser included offenses entered by North Carolina defendants charged with capital crimes, who thereby escaped possible death penalties. *North Carolina v. Alford*, 400 U.S. 25 (1970);[86] *Parker v. North Carolina*, 397 U.S. 790 (1970). Such cases are a commonplace of "capital" justice. *See, e.g., Tollett v. Henderson*, 411 U.S. 258 (1973). Indeed, the prosecutor's attitude toward plea-bargaining in the case of a death-charged defendant is "probably the most widely significant choice separating the doomed from those who . . . go to prison."[87] That attitude in turn reflects fundamentally the prosecutor's choice to insist upon or to remit the punishment of death. For his willingness to offer or accept a lesser plea (and how much lesser) responds not

[85]NEWMAN, CONVICTION: THE DETERMINATION OF GUILT OR INNOCENCE WITHOUT TRIAL 29 (1966).

[86]In *North Carolina v. Alford*, the Court noted that "the State had a strong case of first-degree murder against Alford. Whether he realized or disbelieved his guilt, he insisted on his plea because in his view he had absolutely nothing to gain by a trial and much to gain by pleading. Because of the overwhelming evidence against him, a trial was precisely what neither Alford nor his attorney desired." 400 U.S. at 37.

[87]BLACK, CAPITAL PUNISHMENT: THE INEVITABILITY OF CAPRICE AND MISTAKE 43 (1974).

merely to his estimate of trial costs and contingencies but also to his wholly discretionary judgment – sometimes reasoned, sometimes "gut," sometimes principled and independent, sometimes politically opportunistic, but always selective and subject to the influence of factors which remain "demeaningly trivial compared to the stakes"[88] – as to whether the particular offense or offender *deserves* capital punishment.[89]

Furthermore, an ostensibly "mandatory" death penalty statute is especially likely to result in the selective allowance of guilty pleas to lesser included offenses, since "[m]any prosecutors and judges . . . support the practice as both necessary and desirable . . . to achieve sentencing flexibility which would sometimes be prevented by mandatory sentences."[90] The negotiated

[88]This phrase was used by the late Professor Harry Kalven, Jr., and by Hans Zeisel to describe the factors affecting capital sentencing by juries before *Furman*. KALVEN & ZEISEL, THE AMERICAN JURY 448-449 (1966). It is equally apt to describe the factors influencing the prosecutor's plea-bargaining discretion after *Furman* and *Waddell*.

[89]*See* BLACK, CAPITAL PUNISHMENT: THE INEVITABILITY OF CAPRICE AND MISTAKE 41-44 (1974). *Cf.* note 91 *infra*.

[90]NEWMAN, CONVICTION: THE DETERMINATION OF GUILT OR INNOCENCE WITHOUT TRIAL 102 (1966). *Cf.* Steinberg & Paulsen, *A Conversation with Defense Counsel on Problems of a Criminal Defense*, 7 PRAC. LAW No. 5, 25, 31-32 (1961):

> "[t]hese plea bargains perform a useful function. We have to remember that our sentencing laws are for the most part savage, archaic, and make very little sense. The penalties they set are frequently too tough . . . . The negotiated plea is a way by which prosecutors can make value judgments. They can take some of the inhumanity out of the law in certain situations."

plea is "the means by which . . . [a prosecutor] can avoid the unacceptably rigorous application of the letter of the law."[91] Prosecutors

> "declare without hesitation that one of their goals in the [plea] bargaining process is to nullify harsh, 'unrealistic' penalties that legislators have prescribed for certain crimes."[92]

It is clear that a great many capitally charged defendants in North Carolina have been allowed to plead guilty to lesser offenses and thus to escape the threat of a death penalty.[93] In other cases, however,

[91] Rosett, *Discretion, Severity and Legality in Criminal Justice*, 46 SO. CALIF. L. REV. 12, 25 (1972). *See also* Worgan & Paulsen, *The Position of a Prosecutor in a Criminal Case – A Conversation with a Prosecuting Attorney*, 7 PRAC. LAW. No. 7, 44, 53 (1961):

> "[i]n many cases we believe we mitigate the harshness of the letter of the law by taking a guilty plea. We make such decisions only after much careful thought and I think we make them in a way that the community generally approves."

[92] Alschuler, *The Prosecutor's Role in Plea Bargaining*, 36 U. CHI. L. REV. 50, 54 (1966). *See also* 2 PLOSCOWE (ed.), MANUAL FOR PROSECUTING ATTORNEYS 319 (1956); Coon, *The Indictment Process and Reduced Charges*, N.Y. ST. BAR J. 434, 438 (1968).

[93] *See, e.g.*, the following 17 cases: *State v. Hamlin*, Wake County Super. Ct. No. 74-Cr-11895 (April 1, 1974, indictment for first degree murder; April 12, 1974, guilty plea to second degree murder, sentence of 15-20 years); *State v. Leroy Johnson*, Wake County Super. Ct. No. 74-Cr-7160 (February 25, 1974, indictment for first degree murder; March 8, 1974, guilty plea to second degree murder, sentence of 10 years); *State v. Harris*, Wake County Super. Ct. No. 73-Cr-76418 (February 11, 1974,

(continued)

solicitors have wanted and achieved nothing less than a

(footnote continued from preceding page)

indictment for rape; August 19, 1974, guilty plea to assault on a female, sentence of 1 year); *State v. Santor*, Wake County Super. Ct. No. 73-Cr-68725 (February 11, 1974, indictment for first degree murder; July 15, 1974, guilty plea to voluntary manslaughter, sentence of 20 years); *State v. Lacy Jones*, Wake County Super. Ct. No. 73-Cr-698 (January 21, 1974, indictment for rape; September 16, 1974, guilty plea to assault on a female, sentence of 1 year); *State v. Kenneth Jones*, Wake County Super. Ct. No. 74-Cr-697 (January 21, 1974, indictment for rape; September 16, 1974, guilty plea to assault with intent to inflict serious injury, sentence of 1 year); *State v. Chance*, Wake County Super. Ct. No. 74-Cr-696 (January 21, 1974, indictment for rape; September 16, 1974, guilty plea to assault on a female, sentence of 1 year); *State v. Goldston*, Wake County Super. Ct. No. 73-Cr-73020 (January 7, 1974, indictment for first degree murder; May 24, 1974, guilty plea to voluntary manslaughter, sentence of 7 to 10 years); *State v. Smith*, Wake County Super. Ct. No. 73-Cr-54092 (October 29, 1973, indictment for first degree burglary; February 25, 1974, guilty plea to breaking and entering with intent to commit larceny, sentence of 7-10 years suspended with probation); *State v. Otha Johnson*, Wake County Super. Ct. No. 73-Cr-44188 (August 30, 1973, indictment for first degree murder; April 22, 1974, guilty plea to voluntary manslaughter, sentence of 14-18 years); *State v. Wright*, Wake County Super. Ct. No. 73-Cr-41760 (August 30, 1973, indictment for rape; November 7, 1974, guilty plea to assault on a female, sentence of time served); *State v. Weatherspoon*, Wake County Super. Ct. No. 73-Cr-38571 (August 30, 1973, indictment for first degree burglary; October 12, 1973, guilty plea to felonious breaking and entering, sentence of 1-2 years); *State v. Ramos*, Wake County Super. Ct. No. 73-Cr-30623 (May 29, 1973, indictment for first degree burglary; June 4, 1973, guilty plea to non-felonious breaking and entering, sentence of 2 years suspended with 5 years probation); *State v. DeBoise*, Wake

(continued)

capital conviction and sentence.

Plea bargaining under a "mandatory" statute is frequently said to "provide the opportunity to individualize justice .... Certain mandatory provisions of the statutes which in a particular situation seem unduly harsh may be avoided and a punishment selected which is best suited to the defendant who has already acknowledged his guilt."[94] The result of this process, however, is thoroughly to vitiate the uniform operation of the statute:

(footnote continued from proceeding page)

County Super. Ct. No. 73-Cr-29233 (May 29, 1973, indictment for first degree burglary; October 22, 1973, guilty plea to felonious breaking and entering, sentence of 4 years suspended with probation); *State v. Stephenson*, Wake County Super. Ct. No. 73-Cr-27254 (May 29, 1973, indictment for rape; April 29, 1974, guilty plea to assault with intent to commit rape, sentence of 10 years); *State v. Franks*, Wake County Super. Ct. No 73-Cr-20787 (April 24, 1973, indictment for rape; April 18, 1974, guilty plea to assault with intent to commit rape, sentence of 10 years); *State v. Franks*, Wake County Super. St. No. 73-Cr-15922 (April 9, 1973, indictment for first degree murder; November 26, 1973, guilty plea to voluntary manslaughter, sentence of 20 years). These cases, terminated by a guilty plea to a non-capital offense, were initiated by capital indictments returned in one of North Carolina's one hundred counties (Wake), the county in which petitioner was indicted, for offenses allegedly committed during the January 18, 1973 – April 8, 1974 period when the capital procedures mandated by *State v. Waddell* were in effect.

[94]Heath, *Plea Bargaining – Justice Off the Record*, 9 WASHBURN U. L. REV. 430, 455 (1970). *See also* NEWMAN, CONVICTION: THE DETERMINATION OF GUILT OR INNOCENCE WITHOUT TRIAL 98 (1966):

> "[c]harge reduction offers the court an opportunity to individualize justice by distinguishing between technically similar cases in both sentence and conviction label, especially when sentencing discretion is denied by legislatively fixed terms."

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> "[i]n both Michigan and Kansas, where mandatory sentences for particular crimes are common, plea negotiation not only is a widespread practice considered necessary to obtain guilty pleas but is generally accepted by both prosecution and the trial courts as desirable in situations where charge reduction is necessary to avoid overly severe sentences."[95]

Such a practice – by which some defendants indicted for capital offenses are permitted to escape with sentences less harsh than death as the result of plea negotiations conducted in the unlimited discretion of the prosecutor – may be thought necessary and proper, and it is doubtless inevitable, to achieve "individualized" and "humane" justice under the exceedingly broad range of death penalties made "mandatory" in North Carolina by *Waddell*. But in the very process of "ameliorating the severity of the more extreme punishment," *United States v. Jackson*, 390 U.S. 570, 582 (1968), it reintroduces exactly the kind of arbitrary selectivity condemned in *Furman*.[96]

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[95]NEWMAN, CONVICTION: THE DETERMINATION OF GUILT OR INNOCENCE WITHOUT TRIAL 41 (1966).

> "A major characteristic of criminal justice administration particularly in jurisdictions characterized by legislatively fixed sentences, is charge reduction to elicit a plea of guilty."

Id. at 76.

[96]Although properly supervised plea bargaining may not violate Due Process, *see Brady v. United States*, 397 U.S. 742, 750-755 (1970), the result of plea bargaining practices may nevertheless render the administration of a capital punishment statute invalid under *Furman v. Georgia*. This is so for the same reason that the approval of standardless jury sentencing under the Due Process Clause in *McGautha v. California*, 402 U.S. 183 (1971), did not imply (as the subsequent *Furman* decision made clear) that the *results* of such a procedure complied with the Eighth Amendment.

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C. Jury Discretion

Despite the annulment of explicit sentencing discretion following a first degree murder conviction, a North Carolina jury still has broad license to spare the life of a capital defendant. It may do so by convicting him of a lesser homicide offense, an attempt or an assault, or by recognizing some amorphously defined defense as a justification or mitigation of the offense, as well as by acquitting him altogether in the teeth of the evidence. Although this jury discretion is less straightforward than under North Carolina's pre-*Waddell* capital procedure, it is equally selective, and its greater diffusion merely injects greater arbitrariness into the disposition of capital offenders at the trial stage.

North Carolina General Statutes § 15-170 (repl. vol. 1969) provides that:

> "[u]pon the trial of any indictment the prisoner may be convicted of the crime charged therein or of a less degree of the same crime. . . ."

Petitioner's jury was charged on manslaughter, second degree murder, and first degree murder (A. 69-84), thereby giving it a *de facto* sentencing power to impose any punishment from a term of four months imprisonment (N.C. Gen. Stat. § 14-18 (repl. vol. 1969)) to a "mandatory" death penalty (N.C. Gen. Stat. § 14-17 (repl. vol. 1969)). The instructions given to this jury are representative of those utilized in most cases where a defendant is charged with "premeditated and deliberated" first degree murder; and a charge on lesser included offenses is not infrequently given even in cases of first degree murder allegedly committed during a felony, *see State v. Knight*, 248 N.C. 384, 103 S.E.2d

452 (1958), or by poisoning, *see State v. Matthews*, 142 N.C. 621, 55 S.E. 342 (1906). For not only is it the rule that a defendant may demand a lesser-included-offense instruction as a matter of right whenever *any* evidence could conceivably support a lesser conviction,[97] but – as we shall see below[98] – no effective restraint is imposed upon the trial judge's submission of lessers to the jury in the absence of any such evidence.

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[97]"If . . . there is any evidence, or if any inference can be fairly deduced therefrom, tending to show one of the lower grades of murder, it is then the duty of the trial court under appropriate instructions to submit that view to the jury." *State v. Knight*, 248 N.C. 384, 103 S.E.2d 452, 456 (1958) (quoting *State v. Spivey*, 151 N.C. 676, 65 S.E. 995, 999 (1909)); *State v. Childress*, 228 N.C. 208, 45 S.E.2d 42, 44 (1947). If there is no evidence at all that a defendant was guilty of a lesser included offense, a defendant may not be able to demand such a charge as a matter of right, *State v. Griffin*, 280 N.C. 142, 185 S.E.2d 149, 151 (1971); *State v. Duboise*, 279 N.C. 73, 181 S.E.2d 393, 397 (1971); *State v. Roseman*, 279 N.C. 573, 184 S.E.2d 289, 294 (1971); *State v. Hicks*, 241 N.C. 156, 84 S.E.2d 545, 547 (1954); *State v. Brown*, 227 N.C. 383, 42 S.E.2d 402, 404 (1947); *State v. Cox*, 201 N.C. 357, 160 S.E. 358, 360 (1931), and a trial judge has discretion to charge that a defendant is either guilty of the capital crime or not guilty of any crime, *State v. Hairston*, 280 N.C. 220, 185 S.E.2d 633, 642-643 (1972); *State v. Scales*, 242 N.C. 400, 87 S.E.2d 916, 921 (1955); *State v. Mays*, 225 N.C. 486, 35 S.E.2d 494, 496 (1945); *State v. Satterfield*, 207 N.C. 118, 176 S.E. 466, 467-468 (1934); *State v. Chavis*, 80 N.C. 353, 357-358 (1879). However, if a lesser-included offense charge is given in such a situation, and if a defendant is convicted of the lesser without evidentiary support, the conviction will nevertheless be affirmed on appeal. *See State v. Matthews*, 142 N.C. 621, 55 S.E. 342 (1906), discussed in text at p. 78 *infra*.

[98]*See* text and notes at notes 117-119 *infra*.

The Supreme Court of North Carolina has frequently reversed convictions for capital first degree murder[99] because the trial court failed to give a charge on second degree murder,[100] voluntary manslaughter,[101] or involuntary manslaughter.[102] Indeed, the right to a lesser-included-offense charge is considered so important in

[99]The rule in North Carolina is that "the judge's failure to submit the question of defendant's guilt of the lesser included offense is not cured by a verdict convicting the defendant of the highest offense charged in the bill," *State v. Freeman*, 275 N.C. 662, 170 S.E.2d 461, 465 (1969).

[100]*State v. Knight*, 248 N.C. 384, 103 S.E.2d 452 (1958); *State v. Gause*, 227 N.C. 26, 40 S.E.2d 463 (1946); *State v. Perry*, 209 N.C. 604, 184 S.E. 545 (1936); *State v. Newsome*, 195 N.C. 552, 143 S.E. 187 (1928). When the State attempts to prove "willful, deliberate and premeditated killing," N.C. Gen. Stat. §14-17 (repl. vol. 1969), which did not occur during the course of a felony and was not committed by poison or lying in wait, the jury may decline to return a first degree verdict and convict instead for second degree murder, since "the jury before whom the offender is tried shall determine in their verdict whether the crime is murder in the first degree or second degree," N.C. Gen. Stat. §15-172 (repl. vol. 1969), and since "the jury alone may determine whether an intentional killing has been established where no judicial admission of the fact is made by the defendant." *State v. Todd*, 264 N.C. 524, 142 S.E.2d 154, 158 (1965). *Cf. State v. Phillips*, 264 N.C. 508, 142 S.E.2d 337, 341-343 (1965); *State v. Drake*, 8 N.C. App. 214, 174 S.E.2d 132, 135 (1970).

[101]*State v. Manning*, 251 N.C. 1, 110 S.E.2d 474 (1959); *State v. Robinson*, 188 N.C. 784, 125 S.E. 617 (1924); *State v. Merrick*, 171 N.C. 788, 88 S.E. 501 (1916). *Cf. State v. Freeman*, 275 N.C. 662, 170 S.E.2d 461 (1969).

[102]*State v. Wrenn*, 279 N.C. 676, 185 S.E.2d 129 (1971). *Cf. State v. Freeman*, 280 N.C. 622, 187 S.E.2d 59 (1972); *State v. Freeman*, 275 N.C. 662, 170 S.E.2d 461 (1969).

North Carolina that its omission is held to be reversible error even when the defendant fails to request it. *State v. Riera*, 276 N.C. 361, 172 S.E.2d 535 (1970); *State v. Wagoner*, 249 N.C. 637, 107 S.E.2d 83 (1959). *See State v. Moore*, 275 N.C. 198, 166 S.E.2d 652, 661 (1969); *State v. DeGraffenreid*, 223 N.C. 461, 27 S.E.2d 130, 132 (1943). Trial judges are therefore advised to err on the side of inclusion; and, once lesser-offense instructions on second degree murder and manslaughter are included in a first degree murder trial, the jury is given essentially unrestricted discretion to convict alternatively for any of the three crimes. The definitions of the respective offenses under North Carolina law do not distinguish them except in terms of vague, intangible and elusive elements that remain as intractable to objective fact-finding as they are inviting to "any amount of purely 'discretionary' decision."[103]

North Carolina General Statutes § 14-17 (repl. vol. 1969) defines as murder in the first degree any

> "murder which shall be perpetrated by means of poison, lying in wait, imprisonment, starving, torture, or by any other kind of willful, deliberate and premeditated killing, or which shall be committed in the perpetration or attempt to perpetrate any arson, rape, robbery, burglary or other felony."

It then declares second degree murder to be "[a]ll

[103]BLACK, CAPITAL PUNISHMENT: THE INEVITABILITY OF CAPRICE AND MISTAKE 47 (1974).

other kinds of murder."[104] Thus, in a case like petitioner's, "[m]urder in the first degree is the unlawful killing of a human being with malice, premeditation, and deliberation." *State v. Moore*, 275 N.C. 198, 166 S.E.2d 652, 657 (1969). *See also State v. Faust*, 254 N.C. 101, 118 S.E.2d 769, 771-773 (1961); *State v. Payne*, 213 N.C. 719, 197 S.E. 573, 579 (1938). "Murder in the second degree is the unlawful killing of a human being with malice, but without premeditation and deliberation." *State v. Foust*, 258 N.C. 453, 128 S.E.2d 889, 892 (1963). *See also State v. Mercer*, 275 N.C. 108, 165 S.E.2d 328, 337 (1969); *State v. Smith*, 221 N.C. 278, 20 S.E.2d 313, 320 (1942).[105] Manslaughter is not defined by statute[106] but has been declared judicially to be "the unlawful killing of a human being without malice and without premeditation and deliberation." *State v. Kea*, 256 N.C.

[104]The crime of murder was divided into two degrees in 1893. *See* N.C. Acts 1893, ch. 85. Since this date, the common law definition of murder as an unlawful and malicious killing has been applicable only to second degree murder; and to constitute statutory first degree murder, "the killing must be 'wilful, deliberate, and premeditated.'" *State v. Rhyne*, 124 N.C. 847, 33 S.E. 128, 129 (1899). Before 1893, "[a]ny unlawful killing of a human being with malice aforethought, express or implied, was murder and was punishable by death." *State v. Benton*, 276 N.C. 641, 174 S.E.2d 793, 803 (1970).

[105]"Murder in the first degree is sometimes defined as murder in the second degree plus premeditation," *State v. Benton*, 276 N.C. 641, 174 S.E.2d 793, 804 (1970).

[106]North Carolina General Statutes §14-18 (repl. vol. 1969) merely provides that the punishment for "manslaughter" shall be imprisonment "for not less than four months nor more than twenty years."

492, 124 S.E.2d 174, 175 (1962). *See also State v. Benge*, 272 N.C. 261, 158 S.E.2d 70, 72 (1967); *State v. Baldwin*, 152 N.C. 822, 68 S.E. 148, 151 (1910).

The constituent elements that mark the lines between first and second degree murder and manslaughter are extraordinarily hazy and amorphous. "The crime of murder in the first degree is distinguished by a mental process or psychological condition none [too] . . . easy of expression." *State v. Smith*, 221 N.C. 278, 20 S.E.2d 313, 320 (1942). Indeed, the North Carolina Supreme Court has declared that the reason for the statutory division of murder into two degrees in 1893 was to "select . . . out of all murders denounced by the common law those deemed more heinous on account of the mode of their perpetration." *State v. Streeton*, 231 N.C. 301, 56 S.E.2d 649, 652 (1949). *See also State v. Cole*, 132 N.C. 1069, 44 S.E. 391, 393 (1903).

> "The passage of the Act of 1893 marks an era in the judicial history of the state. As far as we can ascertain, every other state had previously divided the common-law kind of murder into two classes. The theory upon which this change has been made is that the law will always be executed more faithfully when it is in accord with an enlightened idea of justice. Public sentiment has revolted at the thought of placing on a level in the courts one who is provoked by insulting words (not deemed by the common law as any provocation whatever) to kill another with a deadly weapon, with him who waylays and shoots another in order to rob him of his money, or poisons him to gratify an old grudge. So long as artificial proof of malice is allowed to raise the presumption of murder, this new law will fail to accomplish the object for which it was framed . . . . It is not the severity of

laws, but the certainty of their execution, that accomplishes the end that should be always in view in enforcing them. Heretofore public opinion has approved, and often applauded, the conduct of juries in disregarding the instructions of judges as to the technical weight to be given to the use of a deadly weapon. The consequence has been that, a lax administration of the law being tolerated in such cases, other juries have constituted themselves judges of the law as well as of the facts, when proof has shown a more heinous offense. The experience of a few years will probably demonstrate here, as elsewhere, that fewer criminals will escape under a law which is in accord with the public sense of justice than under one which makes no discrimination between offenses differing widely in the degree of moral turpitude exhibited."

State v. Fuller, 114 N.C. 885, 19 S.E. 797, 802 (1894).[107]

[107]*Cf. State v. Locklear*, 118 N.C. 1154, 24 S.E. 410, 411 (1896) (emphasis in original):

"the act of 1893 says in express terms that the jury before whom the case is tried shall determine the degree of murder. And we do not understand this to mean an unbridled, arbitrary, or mob finding, any more than it was before the statute. Even before the act of 1893 we all know that it was within the *power* of the jury to acquit and turn loose a prisoner, no matter how guilty he might be, and the court was powerless. In fact, it is alleged that they often did this. But is is expected they will find the facts, and apply them to the law given by the court, determine whether the prisoner is guilty or not, and, if guilty, in what degree. We see no reason why they should act differently now to what they did before the statute, and we do not believe they are any more disposed to take the law in their own hands in deciding cases under the act of 1893 than they were before."

First degree murder is defined broadly, though vaguely:

"'[m]alice aforethought' was a term used in defining murder prior to the adoption of the statute dividing murder into degrees. As then used it did not mean an actual, express or preconceived disposition; but imported an intent, at the moment, to do without lawful authority, and without the pressure of necessity, that which the law forbade .... As used in ... G.S. § 14-17, the term 'premeditation and deliberation' is more comprehensive and embraces all that is meant by 'aforethought', and more."

State v. Hightower, 226 N.C. 62, 36 S.E.2d 649, 650 (1946).[108] The difference between first and second degree murder turns on the presence or absence of "premeditation" and "deliberation":

"[p]remeditation means 'thought beforehand for some length of time, however short.'

....

'Deliberation means that the act is done in [a] cool state of blood. It does not mean brooding over it or reflecting upon it for a week, a day or an hour, or any other appreciable length of time, but it means an intention to kill,[109] executed by the defendant in a cool state of blood, in

[108]*See also State v. Smith*, 221 N.C. 278, 20 S.E.2d 313, 320 (1942):

"[a]s pointed out by the Attorney General, 'aforethought is defined as "premeditated" (Century, Webster), and "premeditated" is defined as "deliberate." '"

[109]The intention to kill which is required for first degree murder, *see, e.g., State v. Robbins*, 275 N.C. 537, 169 S.E.2d 858, 861 (1969); *State v. Stitt*, 146 N.C. 643, 61 S.E. 566, 567 (1908), is sometimes said to be merely an element of premeditation and deliberation. *State v. Propst*, 274 N.C. 62, 161 S.E.2d 560, 567 (1968); *cf. State v. Gordon*, 241 N.C. 356, 85 S.E.2d 322, 324 (1955).

furtherance of a fixed design to gratify a feeling of revenge, or to accomplish some unlawful purpose, and not under the influence of a violent passion, suddenly aroused by some lawful or just cause or legal provocation.' "

State v. Reams, 277 N.C. 391, 178 S.E.2d 65, 71 (1970) (quoting *State v. Benson*, 183 N.C. 795, 111 S.E. 869, 871 (1922)). *See also State v. Fountain*, 282 N.C. 58, 191 S.E.2d 674, 683 (1972); *State v. Benson*, *supra*. " 'No fixed length of time is required for the mental processes of premeditation and deliberation . . . and it is sufficient if these processes occur prior to, and not simultaneously with, the killing,' " *State v. Perry*, 276 N.C. 339, 172 S.E.2d 541, 547 (1970) (quoting 4 STRONG, NORTH CAROLINA INDEX 196 (2d ed. 1958)). The determination whether "premeditation" and "deliberation" exist is necessarily given over almost entirely to the intuition of the jury[110] because these elements "are not usually susceptible of direct proof, and are therefore susceptible of proof by

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[110] "The line which separates felonious homicides committed . . . without premeditation, from those accompanied by the additional mental condition called 'premeditation,' is shadowy and difficult to fix. The law cannot safely prescribe any uniform and universal rule in regard thereto. As in questions of negligence and the like, it can only define the term, and submit the question of its existence to the jury. It is well settled that the state of mind, intent, sanity, etc., is always a question of fact for the jury."

State v. Daniels, 134 N.C. 671, 46 S.E. 991, 993 (1904). *See also* note 111 *infra*.

circumstances from which the facts sought to be proved may be inferred." *State v. Walters*, 275 N.C. 615, 170 S.E.2d 484, 490 (1969).

"Malice," the factor that separates murder from manslaughter, is equally a matter of inference – and often of inference (or presumption) from the same basic facts that might support the jury's inference of premeditation and deliberation.[111]

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[111] *See, e.g., State v. Duboise*, 279 N.C. 73, 181 S.E.2d 393, 398-399 (1971) (alternative ground), and cases cited.

For example, the North Carolina cases say that malice is "implied" (*see State v. Benson*, 183 N.C. 795, 111 S.E. 869, 871 (1922), quoted in text pp. 72-74 *infra; and see, e.g., State v. Payne*, 213 N.C. 719, 197 S.E. 573, 579 (1938); *State v. Cox*, 153 N.C. 638, 69 S.E. 419, 421 (1910); *State v. McDowell*, 145 N.C. 563, 59 S.E. 690, 692 (1907)) or "presumed" (*see State v. Sparks*, _____ N.C. _____, 207 S.E.2d 712, 719 (1974); *State v. Phillips*, 264 N.C. 508, 142 S.E.2d 337, 341 (1965)) whenever the defendant's intentional discharge of a deadly weapon results in death. This principle plainly involves an evidentiary presumption that throws upon the defendant the burden of proving (either through the presentation of evidence or through the appearance of mitigating circumstances in the State's case, *e.g., State v. Vann*, 162 N.C. 534, 77 S.E. 295, 298 (1913)) that a killing with a firearm was non-malicious. *State v. Jackson*, 284 N.C. 383, 200 S.E.2d 596, 599-600 (1973); *State v. Freeman*, 275 N.C. 662, 170 S.E.2d 461, 464 (1969); *State v. Prince*, 223 N.C. 392, 26 S.E.2d 875, 876 (1943), and cases cited. Whether it also means that the prosecution is always entitled to a second degree murder submission in a case where the defendant is armed with a firearm is unclear. *State v. Downey*, 253 N.C. 348, 117 S.E.2d 39, 43 (1960), implies this conclusion, although earlier cases suggest the contrary. *See State v. Baldwin*, 152 N.C. 822, 68 S.E. 148, 151-152 (1910); *State v. Miller*, 112 N.C. 878, 17 S.E. 167, 168-169 (1893).

(continued)

"Malice is not only hatred, ill will or spite, as it is

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Since *State v. Fuller*, 114 N.C. 885, 19 S.E. 797 (1894), the North Carolina Supreme Court has consistently iterated the rule that premeditation and deliberation – unlike malice– are *not* "presumed" from an intentional discharge of a deadly weapon resulting in death. *E.g., State v. Reams*, 277 N.C. 391, 178 S.E.2d 65, 71 (1970). As expressed in *Fuller*, this doctrine seemed to forbid a permissive inference, as well as a presumption, of premeditation and deliberation. However, later expressions of the *Fuller* rule speak only of the impropriety of a "presumption," *see e.g., State v. Reams, supra*, 178 S.E.2d at 71; *State v. Faust*, 254 N.C. 101, 118 S.E.2d 769, 772 (1961); *State v. Lamm*, 232 N.C. 402, 61 S.E.2d 188, 190 (1950); *State v. Bowser*, 214 N.C. 249, 199 S.E. 31, 33 (1938); *State v. Miller*, 197 N.C. 445, 149 S.E. 590, 592 (1929); *cf. State v. Booker*, 123 N.C. 713, 31 S.E. 376, 380 (1898), and of the shift of the burden of proof which a true presumption implies, *cf. State v. Propst*, 274 N.C. 62, 161 S.E.2d 560, 566-568 (1968). Collateral doctrinal developments have undercut the notion that an *inference* of premeditation and deliberation may not be drawn from intentional use of a deadly weapon: "[p]remeditation and deliberation are not usually susceptible to direct proof but must be established from the circumstances surrounding the homicide." *State v. Sanders*, 276 N.C. 598, 174 S.E.2d 487, 499 (1970), *rev'd on other grounds*, 403 U.S. 948 (1971); *see also State v. Britt*, 285 N.C. 256, 204 S.E.2d 817, 822 (1974); *State v. Evans*, 198 N.C. 82, 150 S.E. 678, 679-680 (1929); *State v. Hamilton*, 19 N.C. App. 436, 199 S.E.2d 159, 160 (1973). The jury is to determine premeditation and deliberation from " 'all the attendant circumstances' " under which the homicide is committed, *State v. Bowser*, 214 N.C. 249, 199 S.E. 31, 34 (1938), including "the manner of the killing, [the defendant's] ... acts and conduct attending its commission," *State v. Robertson*, 166 N.C. 356, 81 S.E. 689, 692 (1914); any "vicious and brutal circumstances," *State v. Duboise*, 279 N.C. 73, 181

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ordinarily understood – to be sure that is malice

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S.E.2d 393, 399 (1971); and the "use of grossly excessive force," *State v. Britt*, 285 N.C. 256, 204 S.E.2d 817, 822 (1974) (quoting *State v. Van Landingham*, 283 N.C. 589, 197 S.E.2d 539, 545 (1973)). "[P]remeditation and deliberation may be inferred from a vicious and brutal slaying of a human being." *State v. Reams*, 277 N.C. 391, 178 S.E.2d 65, 71 (1970). Thus, it is no surprise that the North Carolina Supreme Court has abandoned its early occasional practice of reversing first degree murder convictions (*see State v. Cole*, 132 N.C. 1069, 44 S.E. 391 (1903); *State v. Bishop*, 131 N.C. 733, 42 S.E. 836 (1902) (alternative ground); *State v. Rhyne*, 124 N.C. 847, 33 S.E. 128 (1899); *State v. Thomas* 118 N.C. 1113, 24 S.E. 431 (1896) (alternative ground)) for insufficiency of evidence of premeditation and deliberation. Not since 1903 has a North Carolina appellate court held evidence insufficient to permit a finding of premeditation and deliberation, and therefore to support a first degree murder conviction -- even though reversals for insufficient evidence of matters such as identity are common, *e.g., State v. Poole*, 285 N.W. 108, 203 S.E.2d 786 (1974) (capital burglary); *State v. Jones*, 280 N.C. 60, 184 S.E.2d 862 (1971) (second degree murder). Numerous cases sustain first degree murder verdicts where virtually nothing more than an unprovoked killing with a deadly weapon was established by the prosecution. *See, e.g., State v. Perry*, 276 N.C. 339, 172 S.E.2d 541 (1970); *State v. Old*, 272 N.C. 42, 157 S.E.2d 651 (1967); *State v. Lamm*, 232 N.C. 402, 61 S.E.2d 188 (1950); *State v. Matheson*, 225 N.C. 109, 33 S.E.2d 590 (1945); *State v. Hammonds*, 216 N.C. 67, 3 S.E.2d 439 (1939); *State v. Walker*, 173 N.C. 780, 92 S.E. 327 (1917); *State v. Ferguson*, 17 N.C. App. 367, 194 S.E.2d 217 (1973).

The upshot, then, is that, in all but perhaps the rarest case of a killing by a defendant armed with a deadly weapon, no judicial control is exercised over the power of the jury to convict of any offense from manslaughter through first degree murder. The jury may or may not infer premeditation and deliberation from the same evidence which gives rise to the presumption of malice; and it may or may not find that presumption overcome to its "satisfaction" (*see* pp. 82-83 *infra*) by evidence of mitigation.

– but it also means that condition of mind which prompts a person to take the life of another without just cause, excuse or justification . . . . It may be shown by evidence of hatred, ill will, or dislike, and it is implied in law from the killing with a deadly weapon. . . ."

State v. Benson, 183 N.C. 795, 111 S.E. 869, 871 (1922).[112] *See also State v. Foust*, 258 N.C. 453, 128 S.E.2d 889, 893 (1963); *State v. Baldwin*, 152 N.C.

[112]Proof of a fight between the decedent and the defendant or threats uttered by the decedent to the defendant is often sufficient to negate the inference of malice. *See, e.g.*, the following cases in which defendant was convicted of manslaughter: *State v. Benge*, 272 N.C. 261, 158 S.E.2d 70, 70-72 (1967); *State v. Camp*, 266 N.C. 626, 146 S.E.2d 643, 644-645 (1966); *State v. Suddreth*, 230 N.C. 239, 52 S.E.2d 924, 925 (1949); *State v. Church*, 229 N.C. 718, 51 S.E.2d 345, 346 (1949); *State v. Beachum*, 220 N.C. 531, 17 S.E.2d 674, 675 (1941); *State v. Bright*, 215 N.C. 537, 2 S.E.2d 541, 542 (1939); *State v. Reynolds*, 212 N.C. 37, 192 S.E. 871, 871 (1937); *State v. Baldwin*, 184 N.C. 789, 114 S.E. 837, 838 (1922); *State v. Yates*, 155 N.C. 450, 71 S.E. 317, 317-318 (1911). However, a verdict of second degree murder is often affirmed in cases arising out of similar factual circumstances. *See, e.g.*, the following cases in which defendant was convicted of second degree murder; *State v. Cole*, 280 N.C. 398, 185 S.E.2d 833, 833-834 (1972); *State v. Feaganes*, 272 N.C. 246, 158 S.E.2d 89, 89-90 (1967); *State v. Barber*, 270 N.C. 222, 154 S.E.2d 104, 105-107 (1967); *State v. Morgan*, 245 N.C. 215, 95 S.E.2d 507, 507-508 (1956); *State v. Wingler*, 238 N.C. 485, 78 S.E.2d 303, 305-306 (1953); *State v. Russell*, 233 N.C. 487, 64 S.E.2d 579, 580 (1951); *State v. Taylor*, 226 N.C. 286, 37 S.E.2d 901, 901-902 (1946); *State v. Brinkley*, 183 N.C. 720, 110 S.E. 783, 785-786 (1922); *State v. Gentry*, 125 N.C. 733, 34 S.E. 706, 706-707 (1899); *State v. Rummage*, 19 N.C. App. 239, 193 S.E.2d 475 (1972).

822, 68 S.E. 148, 151 (1910); *State v. Tilley*, 18 N.C. App. 300, 196 S.E.2d 816, 818 (1973).

Definitions of this kind allow a jury almost complete freedom to return a capital or non-capital verdict not only upon the same evidence but upon the same factual interpretation of the evidence, finding or declining to find "premeditation," "deliberation" or "malice" in accordance with the desired sentencing consequences. To recognize this obvious truth is not to impugn the fidelity of jurors to their oaths but only to acknowledge that they are human. *See Jackson v. Denno*, 378 U.S. 368, 388-389 (1964). Legal formulations spelling the difference between life and death in terms that are "refractory to the best-instructed human understanding"[113] do not merely permit – they imperatively require – the exercise of non-objective, non-factual, discretionary judgments and "the play of . . . prejudices."[114] "[I]n a great many close cases, no matter how patiently the judge tries to explain to the jury that which he himself only cloudily understands, the net result must be that twelve laypersons have no alternative to using their general sense of the equities of the matter."[115] Long ago, Justice (then Chief Judge) Cardozo recognized that the obscure distinctions between capital and non-capital grades of homicide – in particular, the concept of premeditation and deliber-

[113]Black, *Crisis in Capital Punishment*, 31 MD. L. REV. 289, 299 (1971).

[114]*Furman v. Georgia*, *supra*, 408 U.S. at 242 (concurring opinion of Mr. Justice Douglas).

[115]BLACK, CAPITAL PUNISHMENT: THE INEVITABILITY OF CAPRICE AND MISTAKE 49-50 (1974).

ation – amounted largely to an indirect "dispensing power" of mercy:

> "... the distinction [between first and second degree murder] is much too vague to be continued in our law .... [t]he statute is framed along the lines of a defective and unreal psychology.... What we have is merely a privilege offered to the jury to find the lesser degree when the suddenness of the intent, the vehemence of the passion, seems to call irresistibly for the exercise of mercy. I have no objection to giving them this dispensing power, but it should be given to them directly and not in a mystifying cloud of words. The present distinction is so obscure that no jury hearing it for the first time can fairly be expected to understand it. I am not at all sure that I understand it myself after trying to apply it for many years and after diligent study of what has been written in the books. Upon the basis of this fine distinction with its obscure and mystifying psychology, scores of men have gone to their death."[116]

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[116]CARDOZO, LAW AND LITERATURE 99-101 (1931). To speak of a "dispensing power," of course, is to describe only the benign half of what juries do when they "answer 'yes' or 'no' to the question whether this defendant was fit to live," *Witherspoon v. Illinois*, 391 U.S. 510, 521 n.20 (1968). A "yes" answer, "like the decision of the prosecutor to accept a plea of guilty in the plea-bargaining process, sounds good; somebody escapes death. The trouble is that if you turn the coin around, somebody else *suffers* death because the jury did *not* find him guilty of a lesser offense rather than of the capital charge. And if the jury's *milder* verdict may be a function of its sympathies, then its *sterner* verdict, by inevitable logic, may be a function of its *lack* of sympathy." BLACK, CAPITAL PUNISHMENT, THE INEVITA-

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We have already seen that the "privilege" described by Justice Cardozo "to find the lesser degree" must be afforded to the jury under North Carolina law when there is "any evidence, or ... any inference ... therefrom"[117] of an unpremeditated or a non-malicious killing, within the vague contours of those unilluminating terms. But even that is not the whole story of the trial judge's or the jury's discretion in regard to lessers. For in North Carolina, a jury may also be charged on a lesser included offense where there is *no* evidence to

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(footnote continued from proceeding page)

BILITY OF CAPRICE AND MISTAKE 47 (1974) (emphasis in original).

Although it seems superfluous to make this point after *Furman*, we may note that the oft-quoted passage in *Witherspoon v. Illinois, supra*, regarding the jury's function in maintaining "a link between contemporary community values and the penal system," 391 U.S. at 519 n.15, did not state or imply the propriety of a system under which different juries decided whether different defendants were fit to live or die according to the particular reflection of community values fortuitously mirrored by the particular jury. The *Witherspoon* passage rather carefully states that, *where a legislature has left the life-or-death sentencing choice to be made by juries without any guiding principles, preferences or standards*, the juries' function is to reflect community attitudes regarding the death penalty – with the consequence that the reflection may not be distorted by improper jury-selection practices. The "where" clause in this analysis is a description of Illinois law (not challenged in *Witherspoon*): it is not a prescription for desirable or constitutional jury performance.

[117]*State v. Knight*, 248 N.C. 384, 103 S.E.2d 452, 456 (1958), quoted more fully in note 97 *supra*.

support such a charge, and a conviction for the lesser offense will be sustained on appeal.[118] *State v. Benton*, 276 N.C. 641, 174 S.E.2d 793 (1970); *State v. Robertson*, 210 N.C. 266, 186 S.E. 247 (1936); *State v. Bryson*, 173 N.C. 803, 92 S.E. 698 (1917). In *State v. Matthews*, 142 N.C. 621, 55 S.E. 342 (1906), for example, the appellant, who had been convicted of second degree murder, claimed that an indictment for murder by poisoning necessarily implied that he was either guilty of first degree murder or innocent of any crime. The Court affirmed, stating that such a conviction was within the power of the jury, 55 S.E. at 343, and that "whatever the reasoning of the jury, the prisoner has no cause to complain that he was not convicted of the higher offense." 55 S.E. at 344. In *State v. Quick*, 150 N.C. 820, 64 S.E. 168, 170 (1909), the Court held that the giving of a manslaughter charge in a first degree murder case had been proper:

> "[s]uppose the court erroneously submitted to the jury a view of the case not supported by evidence whereby the jury were permitted, if they saw fit, to convict of manslaughter instead of murder,

[118] The Supreme Court of North Carolina has occasionally disapproved of this practice, *State v. Bryant*, 280 N.C. 551, 187 S.E.2d 111, 114 (1972); *State v. Allen*, 279 N.C. 115, 181 S.E.2d 453, 457 (1971); *State v. Bentley*, 223 N.C. 563, 27 S.E.2d 738, 741 (1943), but it has never reversed a conviction of a lesser included offense on the ground that there was no evidence to justify submitting such an offense to the jury.

> what right has the defendant to complain? It is an error prejudicial to the state, and not to him."[119]

In *State v. Bentley*, 223 N.C. 563, 27 S.E.2d 738, 740 (1943), the Court declared:

> "[i]f we are to understand the appellant to base his demand for discharge merely on the fact that the jury by an act of grace has found him guilty of a minor offense, of which there is no evidence, instead of the more serious offense charged, this is to look a gift horse in the mouth; more especially, since the conclusion that there is no evidence must be reached by conceding that all the evidence, including the admission of the defendant, points to a graver crime. Such verdicts occur now and then, despite the efforts of the courts to discourage them. When they do, although illogical or even incongruous, since they are favorable to the accused, it is settled law that they will not be disturbed."

The jury has the further statutory power in felony cases to find a defendant guilty of either an attempt to commit the crime charged in the indictment or an assault with intent to commit that crime. North Carolina General Statutes § 15-170 (repl. vol. 1969) provides:

[119] "An error on the side of mercy is not reversible . . . ." *State v. Fowler*, 151 N.C. 731, 66 S.E. 567, 567 (1909). *Accord: State v. Rowe*, 155 N.C. 436, 71 S.E. 332, 337 (1911). *See also State v. Vestal*, 283 N.C. 249, 195 S.E.2d 297, 299-300 (1973); *State v. Freeman*, 275 N.C. 662, 170 S.E.2d 461, 466 (1969); *State v. Johnson*, 218 N.C. 604, 12 S.E.2d 278, 288 (1940); *State v. Hall*, 214 N.C. 639, 200 S.E. 375, 377 (1939); *State v. Ratliff*, 199 N.C. 9, 153 S.E. 605, 606 (1930).

> "[u]pon the trial of any indictment the prisoner may be convicted of the crime charged therein . . . or of an attempt to commit the crime so charged, or of an attempt to commit a less degree of the same crime."

And N.C. Gen. Stat. § 15-169 (repl. vol. 1969) provides that:

> "[o]n the trial of any person for . . . any felony whatsoever, when the crime charged includes an assault against the person, it is lawful for the jury to acquit of the felony and to find a verdict of guilty of assault against the person indicted, if the evidence warrants such a finding . . . ."

Failure of the trial court to instruct the jury on attempt or assault may be reversible error. *State v. Williams*, 185 N.C. 685, 116 S.E. 736 (1923).[120]

Additional avenues for avoidance of a "mandatory" death penalty for first degree murder are provided by the power of North Carolina juries to allow a variety of indefinitely defined defenses, justifications and mitigations to the capital charge. These include the complete defenses of self-defense (or defense of others), *State v. Robinson*, 213 N.C. 273, 195 S.E. 824, 829 (1938), and insanity, *State v. Atkinson*, 275 N.C. 288, 167 S.E.2d 241, 256-257 (1969); provocation and passion, *State v. Merrick*, 171 N.C. 788, 88 S.E. 501, 503

[120] *See also State v. Green*, 246 N.C. 717, 100 S.E.2d 52, 53-54 (1957); *State v. Roy*, 233 N.C. 558, 64 S.E.2d 840, 841 (1951); *State v. Webb*, 20 N.C. App. 199, 200 S.E.2d 840, 841 (1973). *Cf. State v. Bryant*, 280 N.C. 551, 187 S.E.2d 111, 116–118 (1972) (dissenting opinion of Mr. Chief Justice Bobbitt). "An assault with intent to commit rape is a lesser degree of the felony and crime of rape. It is well settled with us that an indictment for rape includes an assault with intent to commit rape." *State v. Green*, 246 N.C. 717, 100 S.E.2d 52, 54 (1957).

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(1916); *State v. Johnson*, 23 N.C. 354, 359, 362 (1840); and "imperfect" self-defense, *State v. Thomas*, 184 N.C. 757, 114 S.E. 834, 836 (1922), which serve to reduce murder to manslaughter – doctrines of particular significance because "every practitioner, who has had any experience in the trial of capital cases, knows how prone juries are to compromise a capital case upon the middle ground of manslaughter," *State v. Brittain*, 89 N.C. 481, 501 (1883); and intoxication, which may avert at least a conviction of murder in the first degree, *State v. Hammonds*, 216 N.C. 67, 3 S.E.2d 439, 446-447 (1939). Each of these doctrines involves an "affirmative" defense which the jury may or may not choose to accept upon the evidence urged by the defendant to support it; each requires largely subjective judgments by jurors in the application of principles of the greatest vagueness and imprecision;[121] and the

[121] The contours of each North Carolina doctrine mentioned above are described in the following paragraphs, with the exception of insanity. Concerning the implications of the insanity defense as a means of avoiding capital punishment, see BLACK, CAPITAL PUNISHMENT: THE INEVITABILITY OF CAPRICE AND MISTAKE 50-55 (1974). North Carolina employs the traditional M'Naghten test of legal insanity, *State v. Humphrey*, 283 N.C. 570, 196 S.E.2d 516, 518-519 (1973), whose amorphousness is notorious, *see, e.g.*, GOLDSTEIN, THE INSANITY DEFENSE 44-66 (1967). And two ancillary North Carolina doctrines effectively consign the insanity defense to the complete discretion of the jury. First, the quantum of evidence suggesting mental abnormality which is ordinarily necessary to raise the issue for the jury's consideration is extremely small, *cf. State v. Atkinson*, 275 N.C. 288, 167 S.E.2d 241, 256–257 (1969), *rev'd on other grounds*, 403 U.S. 948 (1971); *State v. Harris*, 223 N.C. 697, 28 S.E.2d 232, 237 (1943), except, perhaps, where the nature of the testimony is not directed to the M'Naghten issue, *see State v. Helms*, 284 N.C. 508, 201 S.E.2d 850, 852-853 (1974). Second, the burden of proof upon the issue is the "satisfaction of the jury" test (*see* pp. 82-83 *infra*), and "[t]he jury alone is the judge of its satisfaction." *State v. Harris, supra*, 28 S.E.2d at 237-238.

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peculiar North Carolina burden of proof on these issues – evidence "sufficient to satisfy" the jury – explicitly invites the making of those judgments in a wholly discretionary, non-objective manner.

> "[The North Carolina] cases enunciate and reiterate the rule – established in our law for over one hundred years, *State v. Willis*, 63 N.C. 26 (1868) – that when the burden rests upon an accused to establish an affirmative defense or to rebut the presumption of malice which the evidence has raised against him, the *quantum* of proof is to the satisfaction of the jury – not by the greater weight of the evidence nor beyond a reasonable doubt – *but simply to the satisfaction of the jury*. Even proof by the greater weight of the evidence – a bare preponderance of the proof – may be sufficient to satisfy the jury, and the jury alone determines by what evidence it is satisfied."

State v. Freeman, 275 N.C. 662, 170 S.E.2d 461, 464 (1969) (emphasis in original).[122] "[T]he intensity of the

[122] *See also State v. Jackson*, 284 N.C. 383, 200 S.E.2d 596, 599-600 (1973); *State v. Bolin*, 281 N.C. 415, 189 S.E.2d 235, 242 (1972); *State v. Boyd*, 278 N.C. 682, 180 S.E.2d 794, 797 (1971); *State v. Winford*, 279 N.C. 58, 181 S.E.2d 423, 428 (1971); *State v. Mercer*, 275 N.C. 108, 165 S.E.2d 328, 333 (1969); *State v. Todd*, 264 N.C. 524, 142 S.E.2d 154, 158 (1965); *State v. Prince*, 223 N.C. 392, 26 S.E.2d 875, 876 (1943); *State v. Meares*, 222 N.C. 436, 23 S.E.2d 311, 312 (1942); *State v. Benson*, 183 N.C. 795, 111 S.E. 869, 871 (1922); *State v. Carland*, 90 N.C. 668, 674-675 (1884); *State v. Calloway*, 1 N.C. App. 150, 160 S.E.2d 501, 503 (1968); *State v. Richardson*, 14 N.C. App. 86, 187 S.E.2d 435, 437 (1972); *and see State v. Barrett*, 132 N.C. 1005, 43 S.E. 832, 833 (1903) (disapproving instructions that an affirmative defense must be established by the "greater proof" or "stronger proof").

proof required to 'satisfy the jury' . . . cannot be defined by the court as being 'less than,' 'the same as,' or 'more than' the greater weight of the evidence or the preponderance of the evidence," STANSBURY, NORTH CAROLINA EVIDENCE § 214 (2d ed. 1963), because "the jury alone is the judge" of what satisfies it, *State v. Prince*, 223 N.C. 392, 265. E.2d 875, 876 (1943). Therefore, the " 'accepted formula *and the one that should be used if risk of error is to be avoided*, is that the defendant has the burden of proving his defense (or mitigation) "to the satisfaction of the jury – not by the greater weight of the evidence nor beyond a reasonable doubt – but simply to the satisfaction of the jury." ' " *State v. Freeman, supra*, 170 S.E.2d at 464 (quoting **STANSBURY**, *op. cit. supra* (emphasis in opinion)).

The elements of which the jury must be thus "satisfied" are characteristically impressionistic. In assessing petitioner's claim of self-defense, for example, his trial jurors were called upon to decide whether, at the time of the incident with a man who had beaten him bloody that afternoon, petitioner had a "reasonable" apprehension of the necessity to kill in order to avoid suffering death or great bodily harm. *See State v. Watkins*, 283 N.C. 504, 196 S.E.2d 750, 754 (1973); *State v. Kirby*, 273 N.C. 306, 160 S.E.2d 24, 27 (1968); *State v. Johnson*, 270 N.C. 215, 154 S.E.2d 48, 52 (1967); *State v. Fowler*, 250 N.C. 595, 108 S.E.2d 892, 894 (1959); *State v. Bryant*, 213 N.C. 752, 197 S.E. 530, 533 (1938); *State v. Robinson*, 213 N.C. 273, 195 S.E. 824, 828 (1938). The application of this principle in the context of a case where the defendant seeks to prove that a prior fight with the decedent was

resumed just before the killing obviously presents peculiar difficulties. *See State v. Winford*, 279 N.C. 58, 181 S.E.2d 423 (1971); *State v. Baldwin*, 152 N.C. 822, 68 S.E. 148 (1910).

> "[O]ne may kill in defense of himself, or his family, when not actually necessary to prevent death or great bodily harm, if he believes it to be necessary and has a reasonable ground for the belief."

State v. Marshall, 208 N.C. 127, 179 S.E. 427, 428 (1935).[123] *See, e.g., State v. Gladden*, 279 N.C. 566, 184 S.E.2d 249, 253 (1971); *State v. Todd*, 264 N.C. 524, 142 S.E.2d 154, 159 (1965). However, the defendant must not have been the "aggressor," *State v. Jackson*, 284 N.C. 383, 200 S.E.2d 596, 601 (1973) – a notion apparently involving concepts of relative "fault"[124] – and he must have "used no more force

[123] The *Marshall* case is frequently cited as the leading modern exposition of the law of self-defense in North Carolina. A more recent summary is found in *State v. Jackson*, 284 N.C. 383, 200 S.E.2d 596, 600-601 (1973). *See also State v. Jennings*, 276 N.C. 157, 171 S.E.2d 447, 450-453 (1970); *State v. Kirby*, 273 N.C. 306, 160 S.E.2d 24, 26-29 (1968); *State v. Goode*, 249 N.C. 632, 107 S.E.2d 70, 71-72 (1959); *State v. Barrett*, 132 N.C. 1005, 43 S.E. 832, 832-835 (1903).

[124] The North Carolina cases abound with statements that, in order to prevail on a claim of self-defense, a defendant must have been "without fault" in provoking the assault against which he defends. *See, e.g., State v. Watkins* 283 N.C. 504, 196 S.E.2d 750, 755 (1973); *State v. Winford*, 279 N.C. 58, 181 S.E.2d 423, 429-431 (1971); *State v. Wynn*, 278 N.C. 513, 180 S.E.2d 135, 139 (1971); *State v. Johnson*, 278 N.C. 252, 179 S.E.2d 429, 432 (1971); *State v. Davis*, 225 N.C. 117, 33 S.E.2d 623, 624

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than was or reasonably appeared necessary under the circumstances to protect himself from death or great bodily harm," *State v. Boyd*, 278 N.C. 682, 180 S.E.2d 794, 797 (1971). The use of "excessive force" defeats a claim of self-defense;[125] but one who uses excessive force may nevertheless prevail upon the partial defense of *imperfect* self-defense, which reduces murder – even by an intentional killing – to manslaughter, *State v. Rummage*, 280 N.C. 51, 185 S.E.2d 221, 225 (1971);

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(1945); *State v. Robinson*, 213 N.C. 273, 195 S.E. 824, 828-830 (1938); *State v. Blevins*, 138 N.C. 668, 50 S.E. 763, 764 (1905). In *State v. Crisp*, 170 N.C. 785, 87 S.E. 511 (1916), the North Carolina Supreme Court refined the fault concept (" 'a perfect right of self-defense can only obtain and avail where the party pleading it acted from necessity and was wholly free from wrong or blame in occasioning or producing the necessity which required his actions,' " 87 S.E. at 514) by recognizing degrees of fault: if a defendant begins an affray with the intention of inflicting great bodily harm, his right of self-defense is lost and the killing is murder; but if he begins or provokes the affray with some lesser assault or verbal abuse, his right of self-defense is rendered "imperfect," *ibid.*, and he is guilty of manslaughter. The *Crisp* principle, turning the right of self-defense upon moral blame-worthiness, has deep roots in North Carolina law. *See, e.g., State v. Chavis*, 80 N.C. 353, 358 (1879); *State v. Ellis*, 101 N.C. 765, 7 S.E. 704, 705 (1888).

[125] *State v. Jackson*, 284 N.C. 383, 200 S.E.2d 596, 601 (1973). *See also, e.g., State v. Benge*, 272 N.C. 261, 158 S.E.2d 70, 72 (1967); *State v. McDonald*, 249 N.C. 419, 106 S.E.2d 477, 478 (1959); *State v. Mosley*, 213 N.C. 304, 195 S.E. 830, 832 (1938); *State v. Terrell*, 212 N.C. 145, 193 S.E. 161, 164 (1937); *State v. Marshall*, 208 N.C. 127, 179 S.E. 427, 428 (1935); *State v. Glenn*, 198 N.C. 79, 150 S.E. 663, 664 (1929); *State v. Cox*, 153 N.C. 638, 69 S.E. 419, 422 (1910).

State v. Wynn, 278 N.C. 513, 180 S.E. 2d 135, 139 (1971); *State v. Cooper*, 273 N.C. 51, 159 S.E.2d 305, 309 (1968); *State v. Robinson*, 188 N.C. 784, 125 S.E. 617, 619 (1924); *State v. Cox*, 153 N.C. 638, 69 S.E. 419, 422 (1910). *See also State v. Woods*, 278 N.C. 210, 179 S.E.2d 358, 363 (1971); *State v. Ramey*, 273 N.C. 325, 160 S.E.2d 56, 59 (1968). Moreover, one who kills under the impulse of an *unreasonable* fear of death or serious bodily harm may also claim imperfect self-defense, reducing murder to manslaughter. *State v. Thomas*, 184 N.C. 757, 114 S.E. 834, 836-837 (1922);[126] *and see State v. Jennings*, 276 N.C. 157, 171 S.E.2d 447, 450 (1970).

Another partial defense that may result in a manslaughter verdict is provocation and passion. The North Carolina version of this doctrine is complex. Provocation alone (isolated from the passion that it may arouse) is held not to preclude malice but only to rebut the presumption of malice arising from an intentional killing with a deadly weapon. *State v.*

[126]In addition to the "excessive force" and "unreasonable fear" varieties of imperfect self-defense, North Carolina law recognizes other situations in which a killing may be nonmalicious, and hence merely manslaughter, because the defendant's use of deadly force was self-protective although not legally justifiable under the doctrines pertaining to self-defense. *See State v. Finch*, 177 N.C. 599, 99 S.E. 409, 414 (1919); *State v. Yarborough*, 8 N.C. 78, 85 (1820). One such situation is the permutation of the "aggressor" doctrine described in note 124 *supra*. Another is the situation in which the defendant fails to comply with the "safe-retreat" requirement for perfect self-defense. *See State v. Garland*, 138 N.C. 675, 50 S.E. 853, 854-855 (1905); *cf. State v. Johnson*, 23 N.C. 354, 364 (1840).

Johnson, 23 N.C. 354, 359 (1840). Passion aroused by provocation, on the other hand, is said to be legally exclusive of malice: "[i]n law they cannot co-exist." *Id.* at 362. The psychological explanation offered by the early cases is that passion renders an individual heedless of the dictate of reason not to kill. *See State v. Hill*, 20 N.C. 491, 496 (1839); *State v. Baldwin*, 152 N.C. 822, 68 S.E. 148, 151-152 (1910). But even from the outset the doctrine has been seen as an "indulgence of the law," *State v. Hill, supra*, 20 N.C. at 496, "a condescension to the frailty of the human frame," *ibid.* "In mitigating the offence to manslaughter where death ensues upon a sudden rencounter of this sort, the law shews its indulgence to that frailty of human nature which urges men, before they have an opportunity for reflection, to a compliance with those common notions of honour which forbid either to give way to, or acknowledge the superior prowess of, the other." *State v. Jarrott*, 23 N.C. 76, 85 (1840). *See also State v. Merrick*, 171 N.C. 788, 88 S.E. 501, 503 (1916). As might be expected of a moralistic conception of this nature, its rules are fine-spun and casuistic. The North Carolina Supreme Court has declared that "'"passion" means any of the emotions of the mind known as rage, anger, hatred, furious resentment, or terror, rendering the mind incapable of cool reflection' . . . . 'Passion is not limited to rage, anger, or resentment. It may be fear, terror, or, according to some decisions, "excitement" or "nervousness,"'" *State v. Jennings*, 276 N.C. 157, 171 S.E.2d 447, 450 (1970). Passion must spring from provocation, *State v. Carter*, 76 N.C. 20, 22-23 (1877); "slight" provocation is insufficient, *State v. Ellis*, 101 N.C. 765, 7 S.E. 704, 705 (1888); *see*

State v. Keaton, 206 N.C. 682, 175 S.E. 296, 298 (1934); the provoking conduct must in theory "amount to an actual or threatened assault," *State v. Benson*, 183 N.C. 795, 111 S.E. 869, 871 (1922); *see also State v. Mosley*, 213 N.C. 304, 195 S.E. 830, 832-833 (1938).[127] North Carolina appellate courts have managed to remain within these rules with only a little straining;[128] but trial courts and juries have ignored them entirely.[129] Passion is sometimes said to be synonymous with "heat of blood," *State v. Jennings*, 276 N.C. 157, 171 S.E.2d 447, 449 (1970); *State v. Cooper*, 273 N.C. 51, 159 S.E.2d 305, 309 (1968); but then again it is said that " 'cool state of blood' does not mean the absence of passion and emotion . . . ." *State v. Britt*, 285 N.C. 256, 204 S.E.2d 817, 822 (1974). The sum of the doctrine is to make murder or

[127]The provoking conduct need not, however, amount to a felonious assault, *State v. Will*, 18 N.C. 121, 169 (1834), and it need not have threatened the defendant's life, *State v. Sizemore*, 52 N.C. 206, 209 (1859).

[128]*See, e.g., State v. Baldwin*, 152 N.C. 822, 68 S.E. 148 (1910) (unlawful arrest by the victim who "shoved" the defendant held adequate provocation); *State v. Briggs*, 20 N.C. App. 368, 201 S.E.2d 580 (1974) (victim's actions of breaking defendant's car window and inserting the upper part of his body into the car held adequate provocation).

[129]*See, e.g., State v. Freeman*, 275 N.C. 662, 170 S.E.2d 461 (1969) (victim threatened defendant, ran away, returned with his hand in his pocket; defendant who shot victim convicted of manslaughter); *State v. Phillips*, 262 N.C. 723, 138 S.E.2d 626 (1964) (victim opened door of car containing defendant and woman friend; defendant who shot victim convicted of manslaughter).

manslaughter liability depend essentially upon the jury's empathy with the defendant on trial:

> "reason should, at the time of the act, be disturbed or obscured by passion to an extent which might render ordinary men, of fair average disposition, liable to act rashly or without due deliberation or reflection, and from passion rather than judgment."

State v. Merrick, 171 N.C. 788, 88 S.E. 501, 503 (1916) (quoting *Maher v. People*, 10 Mich. 212, 220 (1862)).[130]

These several doctrines, of course, do not exhaust the non-capital options available to petitioner's jury. Jurors in his case or like cases, applying legal principles that leave the widest latitude for subjective judgment and the "natural human tendency to see facts and to evaluate evidence in a manner leading to a desired conclusion,"[131] might have returned verdicts ranging

[130]Provocation may also be held inadequate where the defendant's response is disproportionately severe. *State v. Ellis*, 101 N.C. 765, 7 S.E. 704, 705 (1888); *State v. Chavis*, 80 N.C. 353, 358 (1879); *State v. Curry*, 46 N.C. 280, 287 (1854). *Cf. State v. Gooch*, 94 N.C. 987, 1010 (1886).

[131]BLACK, CAPITAL PUNISHMENT: THE INEVITABILITY OF CAPRICE AND MISTAKE 46 (1974).

from second degree murder[132] to acquittal,[133] in order

[132]Alcohol was implicated in petitioner's case (A. 14-15, 28-29, 52, 54), as it is in so many homicide cases. *See* WOLFGANG, PATTERNS IN CRIMINAL HOMICIDE 165-166, 323 (1966). Its involvement required consideration by the jury on the question of the premeditation and deliberation requisite for a capital, first degree murder conviction.

> "... [W]hether intoxication and premeditation can coexist depends upon the degree of inebriety and its effect upon the mind and passions. 'No inference of the absence of deliberation and premeditation arises from intoxication, as a matter of law.' State v. Murphy, 157 N.C. 614, 619, 72 S.E. 1075, 1077. '[A] person may be excited, intoxicated and emotionally upset, and still have the capability to formulate the necessary plan, design, or intention to commit murder in the first degree.' "

State v. Hamby, 275 N.C. 674, 174 S.E.2d 385, 387 (1970). *See also State v. Duncan*, 282 N.C. 412, 193 S.E.2d 65, 69-70 (1972); *State v. Baldwin*, 276 N.C. 690, 174 S.E.2d 526, 532-533 (1970); *State v. Propst*, 274 N.C. 62, 161 S.E.2d 560, 567-568 (1968); *State v. Arnold*, 264 N.C. 348, 141 S.E.2d 473, 474-475 (1965); *State v. Smith*, 221 N.C. 278, 20 S.E.2d 313, 321 (1942).

[133]Jury acquittals motivated solely to evade "mandatory" death sentences are an historical commonplace in the administration of "capital" justice. *See, e.g., State v. Fuller*, 114 N.C. 885, 19 S.E. 797, 802 (1894), quoted in text at pp. 67-68, *supra*; *State v. Locklear*, 118 N.C. 1154, 24 S.E. 410, 411 (1896), quoted in note 107, *supra*; Knowlton, *Problems of Jury Discretion in Capital Cases*, 101 U. PA. L. Rev. 1009, 1102 n.18 (1953); Note, *The Two-Trial System in Capital Cases*, 39 N.Y.U. L. REV. 50, 52 (1964); ZEISEL, SOME DATA ON JUROR ATTITUDES TOWARDS CAPITAL PUNISHMENT 2-3 (Center for Studies in Criminal Justice, 1968); Smith, *Capital Punishment*, 59 ALBANY L.J. 232, 241 (1899); Shipley, *Does Capital Punishment Prevent Convictions?* 43 AM. L. REV. 321 (1909).

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to avoid the death penalty. The inevitable propensity of

In *McGautha v. California*, 402 U.S. 183 (1971), this Court noted the "rebellion against the common-law rule imposing a mandatory death sentence on all convicted murderers," *id.* at 198, and the fact that "jurors on occasion took the law into their own hands in [murder] cases which were 'willful, deliberate, and premeditated' in any view of that phrase, but which nevertheless were clearly inappropriate for the death penalty. In such cases they simply refused to convict of the capital offense," *id.* at 199. *See also Andres v. United States*, 333 U.S. 740, 753 (1948) (concurring opinion of Justice Frankfurter); KALVEN & ZEISEL, THE AMERICAN JURY 306-312 (1966); Mackey, *The Inutility of Mandatory Capital Punishment: An Historical Note*, 54 B.U. L. REV. 32 (1974). *Cf.* ROYAL COMMISSION ON CAPITAL PUNISHMENT 1949-1953, REPORT ¶¶ 27-29 (H.M.S.O. 1953) [Cmd. 8932]; 1 RADZINOWICZ, A HISTORY OF ENGLISH CRIMINAL LAW AND ITS ADMINISTRATION FROM 1750 154-160 (1948). "[B]y far the most pronounced argument in favor of ending mandatory death penalties, echoed on every side, was the extreme difficulty of obtaining convictions in cases where a conviction is tantamount to a death sentence." BEDAU, THE DEATH PENALTY IN AMERICA 27 (rev. ed. 1967). This fact is cited by scholars as a reason for a particular jurisdiction's shift from a mandatory to a discretionary system of death sentencing or for a decline in a jurisdiction's conviction rate. *See, e.g., The Death Penalty in the United States*, 9 GREENBAG 129 (1897) (New York); McCafferty, *Major Trends in the Use of Capital Punishment*, 25 FED. PROB. (No. 3) 15 (1961) (District of Columbia); Bedau, *Death Sentences in New Jersey 1907-1960*, 19 RUTGERS L. REV. 1, 28-31 (1965) (New Jersey); Phelps, *Rhode Island's Threat Against Murder*, 18 J. CRIM. L. & CRIM. 552 (1928) (Rhode Island); Bennett, *A Historic Move: Delaware Abolishes Capital Punishment*, 44 A.B.A.J. 1053 (1958), and

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any "mandatory" death-sentencing regime to produce this sort of selective evasion by juries is, of course, enhanced when the death penalty is made "mandatory" for a broad range of offenses including all first degree

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Bennett *Delaware Abolishes Capital Punishment*, 49 J. CRIM. L., CRIM. & POL. SCI. 156 (1958) (Delaware).

Cf. Wicker, "Christmas on the New Death Row," N. Y. Times, Dec. 25, 1973, at 18, col. 1:

> "Raleigh, N.C. Dec. 24 ... In January, 1973, the North Carolina Supreme Court ruled that the Federal Supreme Court had made it unconstitutional for a jury to recommend mercy, hence life imprisonment rather than death, for an arbitrary number of those convicted of first-degree murder, arson, rape or burglary; ... Around here, some are still heaving sighs of relief at the case of a black man charged with breaking into a house and stealing about $10 worth of food. The house was occupied, the break-in occurred at night, so the offense was first-degree burglary. Perhaps influenced by the only alternative available, the jury acquitted him, thus sparing him Christmas on the new Death Row but raising the question how mandatory death sentences can be considered an improvement on cruel and unusual punishment."

murders, rapes, first degree burglaries and arsons.[134] It is encouraged, and all but explicitly condoned, by the North Carolina Supreme Court's ruling – which appears to have no other purpose or effect than to invite the exercise of jury discretion – that capital jurors may be informed of the consequences of their supposedly "mandatory" verdict and its alternatives. *State v. Britt*, 285 N.C. 256, 204 S.E.2d 817 (1974). There, the court held that if "the jury is confused or uncertain as to whether one of its permissive verdicts would result in a mandatory death sentence ... sufficient compelling reason exists to justify [the trial judge's] ... informing the jury of the consequences of their possible verdicts." 204 S.E.2d at 828. The court additionally ruled that "[c]ounsel may, in his argument to the jury, in any

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[134]Indeed, there is evidence that North Carolina adopted a discretionary form of capital sentencing in order to avoid unwarranted acquittals for these crimes by juries who did not want to see sympathetic defendants executed. In 1949, the Special Commission for the Improvement of the Administration of Justice in North Carolina reported that:

> "[o]nly three other states now have the mandatory death penalty and we believe its retention will be definitely harmful. Quite frequently, juries refuse to convict for rape or first degree murder because, from all the circumstances, they do not believe the defendant, though guilty, should suffer death. The result is that verdicts are returned hardly in harmony with evidence. [A discretionary death penalty] ... is already in effect in respect to the crimes of burglary and arson. There is much testimony that it has proved beneficial in such cases."

15 POPULAR GOVERNMENT 13 (January, 1949). A discretionary capital sentencing procedure was adopted shortly thereafter. *See also State v. McMillan*, 233 N.C. 630, 65 S.E.2d 212, 213 (1951).

case, read or state to the jury a statute or other rule of law relevant to such case, including the statutory provision fixing the punishment for the offense charged. . . ." The defense attorney is not forbidden, "in his argument to the jury [to] . . . inform or remind the jury that the death penalty must be imposed in the event it should return a verdict of guilty upon a capital charge." *Id.* at 829.

The manner in which juries function in capital cases – particularly when they are told explicitly what is at stake – has been judicially noticed by the Supreme Court of North Carolina[135] and cannot realistically be ignored by this Court.[136] We venture to say that not a year passes when the certiorari process does not present a multitude of cases, rationally undifferentiable from petitioner's, in which a jury has returned a verdict of second degree murder or less. An altercation in a bar – a separation and renewed meeting of the combatants – some alcohol – a gun: the ingredients are tragically common. They form the backdrop of innumerable killings, crimes whose gravity no one can doubt, but which differing juries have immemorially treated as manslaughter, second degree murder, or first degree murder upon grounds that can only be described as inscrutable. The law reports of North Carolina are full of such cases where the verdict was less than first degree.[137] Spectroscopic color-matching of particular

[135] *State v. Locklear*, 118 N.C. 1154, 24 S.E. 410, 411 (1896), quoted in note 107 *supra; State v. Fuller*, 114 N.C. 885, 19 S.E. 797, 802 (1894), quoted in text at pp. 67-68, *supra; State v. Brittain*, 89 N.C. 481, 501 (1883), quoted in text at p. 81, *supra.*

[136] *Cf. Watts v. Indiana*, 338 U.S. 49, 52 (1949) (plurality opinion of Mr. Justice Frankfurter).

94 [137] We collect some of the cases in Appendix C, pp. 1c-4c *infra.*

cases with petitioner's undoubtedly discloses all of the more or less subtle differences of which the multifariousness of human existence is made. But it is impossible to read any number of these cases and deny the purely discretionary character of the jury judgments they reflect.

D. Executive Clemency

The North Carolina Constitution provides that:

> "[T]he Governor may grant reprieves, commutations, and pardons, after conviction, for all offenses (except in cases of impeachment), upon such conditions as he may think proper, subject to regulations prescribed by law relative to the manner of applying for pardons."

Article III, § 5(6). Governors of the State have, by the exercise of this clemency power, spared the lives of a substantial proportion of condemned prisoners. Between 1903 and 1963, the sentences of 235 out of a total of 358 condemned prisoners were commuted.[138] The chief executive thus commuted 65.6% of North Carolina death sentences over a sixty year period.

The Governor's discretion to spare the lives of condemned felons is absolute. The Constitution reserves to the legislature only the right to prescribe the "manner of applying for pardons;" otherwise, the Governor may grant or deny clemency as he chooses, subject to "such conditions as he may think proper."

[138] Note, *Executive Clemency in Capital Cases*, 39 N.Y.U. L. REV. 136, 192 (1964). *See* notes 146, 147 *infra.*

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The North Carolina Court of Appeals has said with regard to the analogous executive power to grant paroles (a power originally conferred upon the Governor by Article III) that:

> "[i]n a matter which historically, in this State at least, has been considered a function of the executive branch and which by its nature involves a large number of intangibles, rigid guide lines are neither necessary nor desirable."

Jernigan v. State, 10 N.C. App. 562, 179 S.E.2d 788, 792 (1971).

This conception of executive clemency is, of course, widespread; but it may be noted that the authority of the Governor of North Carolina in its exercise is less encumbered than that of the governors of many States. Several of the States which retain the death penalty have chosen to place some or all of the authority to make the clemency decision in the hands of a pardon board or executive council,[139] while others require periodic reports to legislative bodies on the exercise of executive clemency,[140] open hearings,[141] preparation of reasoned decisions on each application,[142] or, in certain kinds of cases, the advice of judicial authorities.[143] The

[139]*See, e.g.*, Conn. Gen. Stat. Rev. § 18-24a (1970); Idaho Const. art. 4, § 7; Utah Code Ann. § 77-62-2 (1968); Neb Const. art. 4, § 13.

[140]*See, e.g.*, N. Y. Const. art. 4, § 4; Ark. Code Ann. § 41-4714 (1973 supp.).

[141]*See, e.g.*, Idaho Const. art. 4 § 7; Neb. Const. art. 4, § 13; Pa. Const. art. 4, § 9.

[142]*See, e.g.*, Del. Const. art. 7, § 1; Utah Const. art. 7, § 12.

[143]*See* California Const. art 5, § 8 (1974 West cum. supp.).

North Carolina procedure requires none of these things.[144]

Under laws providing for a "mandatory" death penalty, grants of clemency have been considerably more frequent than under procedures giving juries explicit discretion to sentence convicted capital defendants to life or death. A 1957 study of the imposition of capital punishment in North Carolina noted a pronounced decline in the number of commutations of death sentences after the 1941 and 1949 statutory amendments which enabled juries to impose sentences of either life imprisonment or death for the four crimes that had theretofore carried "mandatory" death penalties.[145] A 1973 report on the history of the death

[144]North Carolina has, however, adopted the practice of announcing reasons for the grant, but not for the denial, of executive clemency. Note, *Executive Clemency in Capital Cases*, 39 N.Y.U. L. REV. 136, 158 (1964).

[145]Johnson, *Selective Factors in Capital Punishment*, 36 SOCIAL FORCES 165, 166-167 (1957). A study of the history of the death penalty in New Jersey also found evidence that clemency is afforded more frequently under a "mandatory" system than under a discretionary system. *See* Bedau, *Death Sentences in New Jersey 1907-1960*, 19 RUTGERS L. REV. 1 (1964). During the years when the death penalty was mandatory (1907-1915), there were 42 executions and 11 death sentences commuted, a ratio of 11/42 or 26.2%. *Id.* at 10. However, during the years 1916-1960, when a discretionary system of capital punishment was in effect, there were 115 executions and 22 commutations, for a ratio of 22/115 or 19.1%. *Ibid.*

penalty in the State found that while 64%[146] of condemned defendants escaped execution between 1910 and 1948, the percentage of those escaping execution dropped to 38% for the 1949-1962 period, when a discretionary death penalty was in effect for all "capital" crimes.[147]

The apparent explanation for this phenomenon is that in a "mandatory" system, the clemency authority undertakes to compensate for mitigating factors which, while insufficient to justify a verdict of not guilty, are nevertheless viewed by society as meriting some mercy in the imposition of sentence. Clemency serves "as a vehicle for the expression of society's compassion, as an outlet from the rigorous inflexibility of [the] . . . judicial system."[148] One study has noted:

> "[i]n a jurisdiction which provides for the sentence of death unless the jury recommends

[146]BEHRE, A BRIEF HISTORY OF CAPITAL PUNISHMENT IN NORTH CAROLINA, Tables 2 and 3 (N.C. Dept. of Corrections 1973). This 64% figure is slightly different from the commutation rate cited in the *N.Y.U. Law Review* study, p. 95 *supra*, because the years surveyed (1903-1963 in the *N.Y.U. Review* study; 1910-1948 in the Behre study) were not identical. Another study of executive clemency in North Carolina reveals that of the 304 death sentences imposed between July 1, 1938, and December 31, 1953, 229 were commuted by the Governor, for a 77.1% clemency rate during this period. Johnson, *supra* note 145, at 166.

[147]BEHRE, *op. cit. supra* note 146, at Tables 2 and 3.

[148]Lavinsky, *Executive Clemency: Study of a Decisional Problem Arising in the Terminal Stages of the Criminal Process*, 42 CHI.-KENT L. REV. 13, 38 (1965).

> mercy, the judge being bound by the jury's recommendation to impose a sentence, the clemency authority would normally refrain from reweighing the mitigating evidence presented at the trial. Obviously, the jury has here had the opportunity to assess extenuating circumstances apart from the issue of guilt. It is the belief of many that this function of the jury strips the clemency authority of much of its power in capital cases."[149]

If this observation is correct, the "mandatory" death penalty created by *State v. Waddell* is calculated to result in more frequent grants of executive clemency as the Governor effectively takes over where the jury leaves off. Not surprisingly, the clemency process will simply mirror the jury sentencing process condemned in *Furman*, with Governors granting or denying commutation according to standards that are unexplained, unreviewable, and changeable whenever different incumbents take office.[150]

[149]Note, *Executive Clemency in Capital Cases*, 39 N.Y.U.L. REV. 136, 165-166 (1964) (footnote omitted).

[150]*See* the studies cited in note 145 *supra*. A system which places uncontrolled powers of commutation in the hands of a single official is arbitrary by definition. It can also be demonstrated that such a system is likely to be discriminatory in effect. A comparison of the executed and the commuted among condemned prisoners in Pennsylvania between 1914 and 1958 revealed that "less than 15 percent of the death-row offenders with court-appointed counsel received commutation of sentence compared to over 25 percent of those offenders with private counsel" (this differential was characterized as statistically significant for black, but not for white defendants) and that "there is reason to suspect – and statistically significant evidence

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> "For clemency knows no standards that are invocable as a matter of law. To the saved, this is mercy, of a quality not strained. To those who learn they are to die, it is irrational choice for death – the final such choice in a long series."[151]

The various forms of arbitrary selectivity remaining in North Carolina's "mandatory" death penalty procedure thus insure that there will be no meaningful basis for distinguishing the few cases in which the death penalty is imposed from the many cases in which it is not. We do not suggest by the foregoing analysis that the selective discretion present at any of the separate stages of the criminal process would be constitutionally

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to support the suspicion – that Negroes have not received equal consideration for commutation of the death penalty." Wolfgang, Kelly & Nolde, *Comparison of the Executed and the Commuted Among Admissions to Death Row*, 53 J. CRIM. L., CRIM. & POL. SCI. 301, 309, 311 (1962).

A study of executive clemency in Illinois concluded:

> "[c]ertain troublesome patterns seem to suggest themselves from an analysis of the referent Illinois commutation cases. It seems that much depends upon mere luck! What kind of attorney happens to be appointed by the state? How zealous is he in delaying execution through legal maneuvers and in generating publicity and public pressure? Of what logical relevance to life and death is a public relations campaign?"

Lavinsky, *Executive Clemency: Study of a Decisional Problem Arising in the Terminal Stages of the Criminal Process*, 42 CHI.-KENT L. REV. 13, 39 (1965).

[151]BLACK, CAPITAL PUNISHMENT: THE INEVITABILITY OF CAPRICE AND MISTAKE 74 (1974).

objectionable in a non-capital case[152] or even that any one form of discretion would necessarily be enough to invalidate a death penalty under the Eighth Amendment. But the arbitrariness of the entire procedural system is cumulative; and the gauntlet which a capitally charged defendant must now run is fully as unpredictable – its results equally capricious – as under the pre-*Furman*, pre-*Waddell* system. At no point in the process is a visible and deliberative life-death choice required; yet the inevitable discretionary decisions can only be more freakish and wanton inasmuch as they are disguised and more diffused. This deadly lottery brings petitioner's death sentence to the heart of the historic concerns of the Eighth Amendment as recognized in *Furman*.

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[152]BLACK, CAPITAL PUNISHMENT: THE INEVITABILITY OF CAPRICE AND MISTAKE 33 (1974):

> "[o]ur legal system is simply saturated, at all levels, with the ideas that requirements of fairness, certainty, and so on – all the things we mean when we say 'due process of law' – vary with the seriousness of the interest at stake, and that, as a corollary, imposition of the penalty of death carries with it a more exacting requirement than other punitive action of the political society."

Cf. Bell v. Burson, 402 U.S. 535, 540 (1971); *Stanley v. Illinois*, 405 U.S. 645, 650-651 (1972). *See also* pp. 115-117 *infra*.

III.

THE EXCESSIVE CRUELTY OF DEATH

There are additional reasons why the death penalty reinstated by *Waddell* violates the essential guarantees of the Eighth and Fourteenth Amendments. These reasons are interrelated in the prevailing *Furman* opinions, and we treat them together here. Essentially, *Furman* reviewed the history of this country's use of the punishment of death and concluded that, although the extreme penalty was then authorized by law in forty-one American States (and by the federal government and the District of Columbia), it was in fact so rarely and so arbitrarily inflicted under discretionary sentencing procedures that it constituted a cruel and unusual punishment. This was so because the occasional and virtually random extinction of human life was a cruelty compounded by inequity, and because the very randomness and rarity of the punishment belied any claim that it fulfilled an accepted or acceptable penal purpose.

In Part II of this brief, we have demonstrated that the use of the death penalty remains arbitrary, random and occasional under North Carolina's post-*Furman*, purportedly "mandatory" system of capital sentencing because that system provides numerous mechanisms which express and implement the unwillingness of prosecutors, judges, juries and the Governor to accept a general, uniform and even-handed application of the penalty. These mechanisms and their use continue to be the means by which a punishment incapable of general

or substantial application is reserved for visitation on a mute and disfavored few. That sort of application of a penalty is one of the hallmarks of a cruel and unusual punishment in the Eighth Amendment sense. In this Part III, we examine the several relevant hallmarks and submit that they collectively condemn the penalty of death. Such an examination should, however, begin with consideration of the proper standards of judicial review of a penalty challenged under the Eighth Amendment.

A. The Standard of Judicial Review

We start with the "elementary" truth[153] that legislative authorization of a punishment does not establish its conformity to Eighth Amendment principles of decency.[154] If this were otherwise, the Eighth Amendment would be "little more than good advice" from the Founding Fathers to future legislators. *Trop v. Dulles*, 356 U.S. 86, 104 (1958) (plurality opinion of

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[153] *Weems v. United States*, 217 U.S. 349, 379 (1910).

[154] *Trop v. Dulles*, 356 U.S. 86, 103 (1958) (plurality opinion of Chief Justice Warren):

> "[w]e are oath-bound to defend the Constitution. This obligation requires that [legislative] ... enactments be judged by the standards of the Constitution. The Judiciary has the duty of implementing the constitutional safeguards that protect individual rights."

Chief Justice Warren.)[155] "The very purpose of a Bill of Rights was to withdraw certain subjects from the vicissitudes of political controversy, to place them beyond the reach of majorities and officials and to establish them as legal principles to be applied by the courts." *West Virginia State Board of Education v. Barnette*, 319 U.S. 624, 638 (1943).

This basic postulate is the source of the most delicate problem of Eighth Amendment adjudication: striking the balance between respect for the primary legislative power to define crimes and fix sanctions[156] and the diligence commanded by the constitutional role of the judiciary to protect and preserve the Constitution's

[155]George Mason, who drafted the 1776 Virginia Declaration of Rights, *see* note 56 *supra*, which contained a prohibition of cruel and unusual punishments that was almost identical to that of Clause 10 of the English Bill of Rights of 1689 and to the Eighth Amendment, declared in the Virginia ratifying convention that it was necessary to limit the arbitrary punishing power of all branches of government. *See* pp. 38-39 *supra*. Patrick Henry strongly agreed that Congress should not be allowed to "define punishments without this control." 3 ELLIOT'S DEBATES 447 (2d ed. 1863). *See* note 55 *supra*.

[156]In this litigation we deal, of course, with a decision to maintain capital punishment that was made by a bare majority of the North Carolina Supreme Court through the application of state-law severability doctrines to a state statute. Nevertheless, that decision speaks with the voice of North Carolina for federal constitutional purposes. *See Winters v. New York*, 333 U.S. 507, 512-515 (1948); *Cohen v. California*, 403 U.S. 15, 23-24 n.5 (1971).

guarantees of individual rights against governmental – that is, necessarily, majoritarian – overreaching.[157] The inescapable tension and its resolution were described with as much precision as the subject permits in *Weems v. United States*, 217 U.S. 349, 378-379 (1910):

> "... prominence is given to the power of the legislature to define crimes and their punishment. We concede the power in most of its exercises. We disclaim the right to assert a judgment against that of the legislature, of the expediency of the laws, or the right to oppose the judicial power to the legislative power to define crimes and fix their punishment, unless that power encounters in its exercise a constitutional prohibition. In such cases, not our discretion, but our legal duty, strictly defined and imperative in its direction, is invoked. Then the legislative power is brought to the judgment of a power superior to it for the instant. And for the proper exercise of such power there must be a comprehension of all that the legislature did or could take into account, – that is, a consideration of the mischief and the remedy. However, there is a certain subordination of the judiciary to the legislature. The function of the legislature is primary, its exercise fortified by

[157]*Furman v. Georgia*, *supra*, 408 U.S. at 431 (dissenting opinion of Mr. Justice Powell) (citing *Blodgett v. Holden*, 275 U.S. 142, 147-148 (1927) (concurring opinion)):

> "[t]he review of legislative choices, in the performance of our duty to enforce the Constitution, has been characterized most appropriately by Mr. Justice Holmes as 'the gravest and most delicate duty that the Court is called on to perform.' "

presumptions of right and legality, and is not to be interfered with lightly, nor by any judicial conception of its wisdom or propriety. They have no limitations, we repeat, but constitutional ones, and what those are the judiciary must judge."

Thus, although a fitting deference to legislative will and to the autonomy of the States is always required, this Court bears the responsibility, placed exclusively upon it in the last analysis, to define and uphold the specific limitations which a written Constitution has erected as the boundaries beyond which no action or decision of American government may go.[158]

There are circumstances under which the danger is particularly great that legislative judgment will not duly heed the constitutional rights of individuals. Here judicial scrutiny of legislation ought to be commensurately exacting. See *Skinner v. Oklahoma ex rel. Williamson*, 316 U.S. 535, 541 (1942). This is most frequently the case where statutes fall harshly only upon "discrete and insular minorities," *United States v. Carolene Products Co.*, 304 U.S. 144, 153 n.4 (1938),

[158] *Cooper v. Aaron*, 358 U.S. 1, 18 (1958):

"[i]n 1803, Chief Justice Marshall, speaking for a unanimous Court, referring to the Constitution as 'the fundamental and paramount law of the nation,' declared in the notable case of *Marbury v. Madison*, 1 Cranch 137, 177, that 'It is emphatically the province and duty of the judicial department to say what the law is.' This decision declared the basic principle that the federal judiciary is supreme in the exposition of the law of the Constitution, and that principle has ever since been respected by this Court and the Country as a permanent and indispensable feature of our constitutional system."

See also United States v. Nixon, ____ U.S. ____, 94 S.Ct. 3090, 3106 (1974).

and where their operation takes a form that "restricts those political processes which can ordinarily be expected to bring about the repeal of undesirable legislation," *id.* at 152 n.4. It is especially the case where cruel criminal punishments are applied to a very few: that is, in circumstances where the Eighth Amendment may be colorably invoked. And in the present case, additional considerations arising from the unique nature of the punishment of death require an uniquely stringent standard of judicial review under "the evolving standards of decency that mark the progress of a maturing society," *Trop v. Dulles, supra*, 356 U.S., at 101.

First, "[t]he basic concept underlying the Eighth Amendment is nothing less than the dignity of man." *Id.* at 100. The Amendment stands to assure that respect for individual human life and dignity restricts the state's responses to even the most culpable criminal conduct. Yet the decision to use capital punishment on a man implies a judgment that his dignity and worth may be denied absolutely, that his " 'life ceases to be sacred when it is thought useful to kill him.' "[159] Such a judgment deliberately to extinguish human life[160] –

[159] Francart, quoted by Camus, *Reflections on the Guillotine*, in CAMUS, RESISTANCE, REBELLION AND DEATH 131, 176 (Mod. Lib. 1963).

[160] "Death is truly an awesome punishment. The calculated killing of a human being by the State involves, by its very nature, a denial of the executed person's humanity. . . . An executed person has indeed 'lost the right to have rights.' " *Furman v. Georgia, supra*, 408 U.S. at 290 (concurring opinion of Mr. Justice Brennan).

to employ a sanction that necessarily denies the very value upon which the Eighth Amendment rests – imperatively calls upon "the obligations [of] . . . the judiciary to judge the constitutionality of punishment" from an independent perspective. *Furman v. Georgia, supra*, 408 U.S. at 313-314 (concurring opinion of Mr. Justice White).

Second, the death penalty bears an awesome and irrevocable finality[161] incomparable with other punishments.[162] This Court has said of sterilization that "[t]here is no redemption for the individual whom the law touches." *Skinner v. Oklahoma ex rel. Williamson, supra*, 316 U.S. at 541. That is *literally* true of capital punishment. No eloquence can embellish, nor human mind entirely conceive, death's utter irreversibility.[163] New

[161]"Capital punishment is an evil, unless justified [because] . . . it extinguishes, after untellable suffering, the most mysterious and wonderful thing we know, human life." Black, *Crisis in Capital Punishment*, 31 MD. L. REV. 289, 291 (1971).

[162]Thus, the declaration of Lafayette that infliction of the death penalty should be suspended "until . . . the infallibility of human judgment is demonstrated." Quoted in Pollak, *The Errors of Justice*, 284 ANNALS 115 (1952), and CLARK, CRIME IN AMERICA 334 (1970). The quotation has also been attributed to Jefferson. *See* BLOCK, AND MAY GOD HAVE MERCY . . . 1 (1962). *See also* Rubin, *The Supreme Court, Cruel and Unusual Punishment, and the Death Penalty*, 15 CRIME & DELINQ. 121, 130-131 (1969).

[163]"Human justice can never be infallible. No matter how conscientiously courts operate, there still exists a possibility that an innocent person may, due to a combination of circumstances that defeat justice, be sentenced to death and even executed. That possibility is made abundantly clear when one considers the many instances in which innocent persons have been saved from the extreme penalty either by the last minute discovery of new evidence or by a commutation followed perhaps after many years in prison by the discovery of the real criminal."

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knowledge, second thought, calmer passions, lessons of experience – every known corrective for the inevitable errors of judgment in penological, political, and constitutional experimentation comes too late.[164]

Third, any balancing process which sets out to weigh the penalty of death in the pans of the Eighth Amendment must begin with the proposition that capital punishment is self-evidently cruel within every meaning of that word which a civilized, Twentieth-Century society can accept.[165] We do not deal here with a punishment that can be considered cruel only in relation to the conduct that it is used to regulate, *cf. Robinson v. California*, 370 U.S. 660, 667 (1962) –

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SELLIN, THE DEATH PENALTY, 63 (1959), published as an appendix to AMERICAN LAW INSTITUTE, MODEL PENAL CODE, Tent. Draft No. 9 (May 8, 1959). *See also* Hogan, *Murder by Perjury*, 30 FORDHAM L. REV. 285 (1961); BORCHARD, CONVICTING THE INNOCENT 294-303, 309-316 (1932); Gardner, *Helping the Innocent*, 17 U.C.L.A. L. REV. 535 (1970).

[164]"[D]eath is different . . . it is irrevocable in quite a distinct sense from the general irrevocability of all happenings. If a mistake of any kind is discovered, it is too late. In every way and for every purpose, it is too late." BLACK, CAPITAL PUNISHMENT: THE INEVITABILITY OF CAPRICE AND MISTAKE 32 (1974).

[165]The evolutionary character of Eighth Amendment standards no longer needs argument. The Clause is "progressive, and is not fastened to the obsolete, but may acquire meaning as public opinion becomes enlightened by a humane justice." *Weems v. United States*, 217 U.S. 349, 378 (1910). *See also Furman v. Georgia, supra*, 408 U.S. at 242 (concurring opinion of Mr. Justice Douglas; *id.* at 264-269 (concurring opinion of Mr. Justice Brennan); *id.* at 325-328 (concurring opinion of Mr. Justice Marshall); *id.* at 383 (dissenting opinion of Chief Justice Burger); *id.* at 409 (dissenting opinion of Mr. Justice Blackmun); *id.* at 429 (dissenting opinion of Mr. Justice Powell.)

cruel in "consideration of the mischief and the remedy", *Weems v. United States, supra*, 217 U.S. at 373.[166]

> "The imposition and execution of the death penalty are obviously cruel in the dictionary sense. But the penalty has not been considered cruel and unusual in the constitutional sense because it was thought justified by the social ends it was deemed to serve."

Furman v. Georgia, supra, 408 U.S. at 314 (concurring opinion of Mr. Justice White).

It is not an overstatement to describe confinement under sentence of death as exquisite psychological

[166]Nevertheless, Camus' point deserves note:

> "[In considering the argument from *lex talionis*] let us leave aside the fact that the law of retaliation is inapplicable and that it would seem just as excessive to punish the incendiary by setting fire to his house as it would be insufficient to punish the thief by deducting from his bank account a sum equal to his theft. Let us admit that it is just and necessary to compensate for the murder of the victim by the death of the murderer. But beheading is not simply death. It is just as different, in essence, from the privation of life, as a concentration camp is from prison. It is a murder, to be sure, and one that arithmetically pays for the murder committed. But it adds to death a rule, a public premeditation known to the future victim, an organization, in short, which is itself a source of moral sufferings more terrible than death. Hence there is no equivalence. Many laws consider a premeditated crime more serious than a crime of pure violence. But what then is capital punishment but the most premeditated of murders, to which no criminal's deed, however calculated it may be, can be compared? For there to be an equivalence, the death penalty would have to punish a criminal who had warned his victim of the date at which he would inflict a horrible death on him and who, from that moment onward, had confined him at his mercy for months. Such a monster is not encountered in private life."

Camus, *Reflections on the Guillotine*, in CAMUS, RESISTANCE, REBELLION AND DEATH 131, 151-152 (Mod. Lib. 1963).

torture. *See People v. Anderson*, 6 Cal.3d 628, 493 P.2d 880, 894 (1972). With the commendable motive – and under the inescapable obligation – of striving to avoid erroneous or illegal executions, Twentieth-Century American justice has prolonged that torture. Of 608 persons under sentence of death at the end of 1970, 302 had been on Death Row for more than three years, 165 for more than five years, 81 for more than seven years, and 67 for more than eight years.[167] "[C]ontemporary human knowledge"[168] of the nature of suffering and its effects upon the human mind teaches that over such extended periods the familiar manifestations of immediate terror cease as the extraordinary anxiety and pain of condemnation find other outlets. Anguish can no longer be conceived as some enormous multiple of the pain of a broken bone or a crushed fingernail, because human beings cannot tolerate many such multiplications without severe personality distortions such as the denial of reality.[169] The effects of these coping mechanisms observed in Death Row prisoners are acute;[170] the alternative is emotional

[167]UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, BUREAU OF PRISONS, NATIONAL PRISONER STATISTICS, Bulletin No. 46, Capital Punishment 1930-1970 42 (August, 1971).

[168]*Robinson v. California*, 370 U.S. 660, 666 (1972).

[169]*See*, Note, *Mental Suffering Under Sentence of Death: A Cruel and Unusual Punishment*, 57 IOWA L. REV. 814, 827 (1972).

[170]*See* Bluestone & McGahee, *Reaction to Extreme Stress: Impending Death by Execution*, 119 AM. J. PSYCHIATRY 393 (1962).

breakdown.[171]

The torture is perhaps more nearly comprehensible in the words of those who have suffered it:

> "My feeling toward being on death row is unlimited. I can go on and on telling you the different feelings I experience being on Death Row. But I'm going to make it brief, because I can take the 68,634,000 square miles of the Pacific Ocean and put it into ink, and take all the trees in America and put them into pencils and paper, and still, it won't be enough material to express my feeling towards being on death row. My feeling being on death row is like no tomorrow. When I go into deep meditation, I can see life and feel the freedom that the universe has to offer, but when I come out of it, it's like being in the middle of a nightmare. So you can see why my thoughts has no end.

[171]An evaluation of eight North Carolina death row inmates revealed that three, or thirty-five percent, had made "relatively poor adjustments, with obvious deterioration." Gallemore & Panton, *Inmate Responses to Lengthy Death Row Confinement*, 129 AM. J. PSYCHIATRY 81, 82, 1972. One of these had developed a complex delusional system; another became increasingly self-destructive and a third was constantly under medication "with varying degrees of unsustained relief" and was once hospitalized for drug overdose. *Id.* at 82-83. *See also* West, *Medicine and Capital Punishment*, in *Hearings Before the Subcommittee on Criminal Laws and Procedures of the Senate Committee on the Judiciary*, 90th Cong., 2d Sess., on S. 1760, *To Abolish the Death Penalty* (March 20-21 and July 2, 1968) 124, 125, 127 (G.P.O. 1970); Note, *Mental Suffering Under Sentence of Death: A Cruel and Unusual Punishment*, 57 IOWA L. REV. 814 (1972); *Solesbee v. Balkcom*, 339 U.S. 9, 14 (1950) (dissenting opinion of Justice Frankfurter).

I feel as tho the world is caving in on me."[172]

The physical and psychological pain of execution itself – whether life is destroyed by gas, by electrocution, or by other means – is, of course, unmeasurable.[173] It is

[172]Coley, *A Letter from Death Row*, 3 JURIS DOCTOR 19 (Dec. 1973). *Cf.* DOSTOEVSKY, THE IDIOT 20 (Mod. Lib. 1935). *See generally* LEVINE (ed.), DEATH ROW–AN AFFIRMATION OF LIFE (1972); CHESSMAN, TRIAL BY ORDEAL 3 (1955):

> "I've witnessed the disintegration of the minds of the men around me. I've seen these men naked on the floor, rolling in their own excrement. I've listened as they smashed and shattered the sinks and toilets and fixtures in their cells. I've heard their prayers and their screams and their curses. I've observed their bodies being removed after they had destroyed themselves. I've read their pathetic pleas for mercy."

[173]All medical witnesses agree that it takes a few seconds for the condemned man to lose consciousness after inhaling lethal gas. *See* Hamer, *The Execution of Robert H. White by Hydrocyanic Acid Gas*, 95 J. AM. MED. ASSN. 661 (1930); Rosenbloom, *Report of a Case of Chronic Hydrocyanic Acid Poisoning*, 8 J. LAB. & CLIN. MED. 258 (1923); ROYAL COMMISSION ON CAPITAL PUNISHMENT 1949-1953, REPORT 251-256 (H.M.S.O. 1953) [Cmd. 8932]. Other scientists assert that the condemned man is conscious for a longer time and dies by slow agonizing strangulation. KEVORKIAN, MEDICAL RESEARCH AND THE DEATH PENALTY 18-19 (1960). *See also* Schmitt & Schmitt, *The Nature of the Nerve Impulse: The Effect of Cyanides Upon Medullated Nerves* (Pt. 2), 97 AM. J. PHYSIOLOGY 302, 302-304 (1931). *Cf.* DUFFY & HIRSHBERG, 88 MEN AND 2 WOMEN 102-103 (1962):

> "[t]he warden gives the executioner the signal and, out of sight of the witnesses, the executioner presses the lever that allows the cyanide gas eggs to mix with the distilled water

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one of the questions to which capital punishment cuts off an answer, leaving only such scant comfort or nagging doubt as speculation may provide. "Although our information is not conclusive, it appears that there is no method available that guarantees an immediate and painless death." *Furman v. Georgia, supra,* 408 U.S. at 287 (concurring opinion of Mr. Justice Brennan). Here again, the ordinary deference due to legislative judgment encounters the objection that legislators, in common with all other men, simply *cannot* know significant facts on which advised, dispassionate judgment ought to turn at least in part. The decision to kill a human being is intractably a decision to do an act whose most immediate major consequences are unknowable. No amount of legislative inquiries or knowledge can close up that gap (*compare, e.g., McGinnis v. Royster,* 410 U.S. 263 (1973)), and all a legislature's "groping efforts" at experimenting with the penalty of death (*compare, e.g., Tigner v. Texas,* 310 U.S. 141, 148 (1940)) will not provide its members or mankind more information on the subject.

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> and sulphuric acid. In a matter of seconds the prisoner is unconscious. At first there is extreme evidence of horror, pain, strangling. The eyes pop, they turn purple, they drool. It is a horrible sight. Witnesses faint. It finally is as though he has gone to sleep. The body, however, is not disfigured or mutilated in any way."

Evidence regarding the experience of electrocution is similarly inconclusive. A French scientist, Dr. L. G. V. Rota, has said "I do not believe that anyone killed by electrocution dies instantly, no matter how weak the subject may be." Quoted in SCOTT, THE HISTORY OF CAPITAL PUNISHMENT 219 (1950).

Fourth, the compatibility of the death penalty with Eighth Amendment values is called into question by its *de jure* or *de facto* abandonment among civilized nations.[174] Capital punishment has been abolished by most of the countries of Western Europe and the Western Hemisphere,[175] and is now in virtual disuse throughout the world.[176] A penalty thus progressively repudiated on a world-wide scale surely warrants close and critical examination when tested by the constitutional standards of decency of a Nation whose citizens would be widely appalled to believe it laggard in the enlightened administration of justice.[177]

Fifth, long-standing traditions defining the judicial role in capital cases recognize the need for close

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[174]Despite a wave of terrorist bombings in 1974, the British House of Commons decisively rejected a measure to reinstitute the death penalty in Great Britian for terrorist murders. N.Y. Times, Dec. 12, 1974, at 7, col. 1.

[175]An analysis of world-wide trends in the authorization and use of the penalty of death is contained in Appendix D, pp. 1d - 6d *infra.*

[176]"Those countries retaining the death penalty report that in practice it is only exceptionally applied and frequently the persons condemned are later pardoned by executive authority." UNITED NATIONS, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL, Note by the Secretary-General, *Capital Punishment* (E/4947) 3 (February 23, 1971).

[177]In declaring denationalization a cruel and unusual punishment, the Court relied in part upon the fact that "[t]he civilized nations of the world [were] . . . in virtual unanimity that statelessness is not to be imposed as punishment for crime." *Trop. v. Dulles, supra,* 356 U.S. at 102.

scrutiny of the punishment of death. The principle of strict construction *in favorem vitae* runs deep in Anglo-American history,[178] and is only one exemplification of the special safeguards that apply in legal proceedings when life is at stake:

> "[a]ll the state legal systems in one way or another – by requiring jury unanimity, by forbidding pleas of guilty to a capital offense, by providing for automatic appeals, and so on – have recognized this distinction, quite without compulsion from the national Supreme Court. But when such compulsion was needed it has been forthcoming. For many years our federal Supreme Court required of the states that they invariably assign counsel in capital cases, while leaving the question of counsel in noncapital cases open to variation based on special circumstances; the fact that at last the Court decided counsel should be required in all serious criminal cases does not impair the force of the earlier cases as establishing national recognition of the immense difference between imprisonment and death. On the other side of the coin, the Supreme Court has several times upheld, as not violating any federal guarantee, state laws imposing more stringent requirements for trial in capital cases than in other cases."[179]

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[178]*See* 1 RADZINOWICZ, A HISTORY OF ENGLISH CRIMINAL LAW AND ITS ADMINISTRATION FROM 1750 83-106 (1948).

[179]BLACK, CAPITAL PUNISHMENT: THE INEVITABILITY OF CAPRICE AND MISTAKE 34 (1974). Professor Black refers, of course, to the evolution from *Powell v. Alabama*, 278 U.S. 45 (1932), through *Betts v. Brady*, 316 U.S. 455 (1942), to *Gideon v. Wainwright*, 372 U.S. 335 (1963); and to such cases as *Johnson v. Louisiana*, 406 U.S. 356 (1972).

Review of procedural issues in death cases has been pursued under a policy of resolving legal "doubts . . . in favor of the accused,"[180] and capital convictions generally have been scrutinized on appeal with an avowedly strict eye for error.[181] At a time when the other considerations we have enumerated raise the question of the continuing constitutional validity of the death penalty itself, it is appropriate that the same strict scrutiny be turned upon that question.

Finally, in suggesting that sort of scrutiny, we ask no more of the Court than society itself demands. Other punishments – even punishments of extreme severity – are and have long been accepted without the extraordinary controversy, the collective soul-searching, and the parade of elaborate justifications and rationalizations that have accompanied the peculiar institution of capital punishment. Despite the relatively minuscule number of its victims[182] the justifiability of the death penalty has been the subject of continuing and heated

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[180]*Andres v. United States*, 333 U.S. 740, 752 (1948). *See also, e.g., Williams v. Georgia*, 349 U.S. 375, 391 (1955); *Hamilton v. Alabama*, 368 U.S. 52, 55 (1961); *Witherspoon v. Illinois*, 391 U.S. 510, 521 n.20 (1968); *Reid v. Covert*, 354 U.S. 1, 45-46 (1957) (concurring opinion of Justice Frankfurter); *id.* at 77 (concurring opinion of Justice Harlan).

[181]Browning, *The New Death Penalty Statutes: Perpetuating a Costly Myth*, 9 GONZAGA L. REV. 651, 659 (1974), and authorities cited.

[182]In 1970 nearly 80,000 persons were admitted to state and federal adult correctional facilities, only 127 of whom were under sentence of death. UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, SOURCEBOOK OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE STATISTICS 1973 358, 465 (August 1973).

debate[183] in religious, academic, legislative and law enforcement circles and among the general public. It is surely the case that "[a]t the very least . . . contemporary society views this punishment with substantial doubt." *Furman v. Georgia, supra,* 408 U.S. at 300 (concurring opinion of Mr. Justice Brennan).

The moral character of this debate is as significant as its prevalence. The opposition to capital punishment – frequently voiced by religious denominations,[184] among others – has been vigorously asserted on the basis of "fundamental moral and societal values in our civiliza-

[183]The arguments for and against capital punishment have been frequently catalogued. *See, e.g.,* Vialet, *Capital Punishment: Pro and Con Arguments* (United States, Library of Congress, Legislative Reference Service, mimeo, August 3, 1966), reprinted *in Hearings Before the Subcommittee on Criminal Laws and Procedures of the Senate Committee on the Judiciary*, 90th Cong., 2d Sess., on S. 1760, *To Abolish the Death Penalty* (March 20-21 and July 2, 1968) 172-200 (G.P.O. 1970); BEDAU, THE DEATH PENALTY IN AMERICA 120-123 (rev. ed. 1967); 2 NATIONAL COMMISSION ON REFORM OF FEDERAL CRIMINAL LAWS, WORKING PAPERS 1350-1363 (G.P.O. 1970). *See* notes 184-186 *infra.*

[184]For a description of the positions taken by various religious groups in opposition to capital punishment, see Bedau, *The Issue of Capital Punishment*, 53 CURRENT HISTORY No. 312 82, 84-85 August 1967).

tion and in our society."[185] Proponents of the death penalty have responded with equal moral fervor.[186] Surely no other criminal sanction has evoked such passionate, ceaseless philosophical argument.

[185]Canadian Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson, addressing the House of Commons in support of a bill restricting the death penalty for murder in Canada. CANADA, HOUSE OF COMMONS, IV DEBATES, 27th Parl., 2d Sess. (16 Eliz. II) 4370 (Nov. 16, 1967). For similar expressions, *see, e.g.*, Kazis, *Jewish Tradition and Capital Punishment*, 6 TRENDS 6 (Nov.-Dec. 1973); Editorial, *Genesis and Capital Punishment.* 66 CHRISTIAN CENTURY 355 (March 28, 1973); *Controversy Over Capital Punishment: Pro & Con*, 52 CONG. DIGEST 1, 10, 12, 16, 20, 26 (1974); National Council on Crime and Delinquency *Policy Statement on Capital Punishment*, 10 CRIME & DELINQ. 105 (1964); McGee, *Capital Punishment as Seen by a Correctional Administrator*, 28 FED. PROB. No. 2 11 (1964); Milligan, *A Protestant's View of the Death Penalty*, in BEDAU, THE DEATH PENALTY IN AMERICA 175 (rev. ed. 1967); Ehrmann, *For Whom the Chair Waits*, 26 FED. PROB. No. ! 14 (1962); BOK, STAR WORMWOOD (1959); CALVERT, CAPITAL PUNISHMENT IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY (1927); GOWERS, A LIFE FOR A LIFE (1956); KOESTLER, REFLECTIONS ON HANGING (Amer. ed. 1957)

[186]*See, e.g.*, Vellenga, *Christianity and the Death Penalty*, 6 CHRISTIANITY TODAY 7 (Oct. 12, 1959); Hon. Samuel Leibowitz, in *Symposium on Capital Punishment*, 7 N.Y.L.F. 249, 289-296 (1961); *Controversy Over Capital Punishment: Pro & Con*, 52 CONG. DIGEST 1, 11, 13, 15, 21, 25 (1974); Kinney, *In Defense of Capital Punishment*, 54 KY. L. J. 742 (1966); McDermott, *Some Crimes Demand the Death Penalty*, 11 POLICE 4 (Mar.-April, 1967); Caldwell, *Why Is the Death Penalty Retained?* 284 ANNALS 45 (1952); Coakley, *Capital Punishment*, 1 AM. CRIM. L. Q. 27 (1963); Cohen, *The Need for Capital Punishment*, 20 CHITTY'S L.J. 86 (1972); Hook, *The Death Sentence*, in BEDAU, THE DEATH PENALTY IN AMERICA 146 (rev. ed. 1967); Barzun, *In Favor of Capital Punishment*, 31 AM. SCHOLAR 181 (1962).

Agonizings of this sort that can neither be resolved nor stilled suggest a widespread perception that there is something fundamentally questionable about the penalty of death. In view of the extreme infrequency of its use, the troubled concerns which the punishment invariably arouses can only be explained by its uniquely and profoundly problematic aspects: its dissonance with the basic values of our society. For reasons to which we shall return – reasons having to do primarily with the rarity and secrecy of the actual use of the death penalty and with the outcast character of those subjected to it[187] – the problematic aspects of capital punishment have not stayed state and federal legislatures from enacting it. But those aspects particularly warrant independent and stringent examination of the death penalty by this Court at a moment when the Nation, which has not executed a man or woman for seven and a half years, agonizes once again upon the brink.

Such an examination requires that the Court determine whether the manifest cruelty of taking human life is or is not "justified by the social ends it [is] . . . deemed to serve."[188] Because of the unique character of the death penalty,[189] those justifications must be real and substantial;[190] and they must conform

[187] *See* pp. 134 - 139, *infra*.

[188] *Furman v. Georgia*, *supra*, 408 U.S. at 312 (concurring opinion of Mr. Justice White).

[189] *See* pp. 107 - 120 *supra*.

[190] *Cf. N.A.A.C.P. v. Alabama ex rel. Flowers*, 377 U.S. 288, 307-308 (1964) (involving the right of association). *See also Eisenstadt v. Baird*, 405 U.S. 438 (1972); *Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community School District*, 393 U.S. 503 (1969).

to the fashion in which the penalty is applied in fact.[191] If "less drastic means for achieving the same basic purpose"[192] are available, the State must use them rather than indulge in the "pointless and needless extinction of life with only marginal contributions to any discernible social or public purposes."[193] This much is implied in "the duty of [the] . . . Court to determine whether the action [of killing people] bears a reasonable relationship to the achievement of the governmental purpose asserted as its justification,"[194] or whether, conversely, the punishment of death is excessive[195] and therefore unconstitutional.

B. THE JUSTIFIABILITY OF THE PENALTY OF DEATH

Criminal punishments are traditionally justified by five related but separable objectives: reformation and

[191] *Cf. Edwards v. South Carolina*, 372 U.S. 229, 236-237 (1963) (involving the right of free speech). *See also e.g., Shapiro v. Thompson*, 394 U.S. 618, 631 (1969); *Carrington v. Rash*, 380 U.S. 89, 94-96 (1965).

[192] *Shelton v. Tucker*, 364 U.S. 479, 488 (1960) (involving the right of association).

[193] *Furman v. Georgia*, *supra*, 408 U.S. at 312 (concurring opinion of Mr. Justice White).

[194] *Bates v. City of Little Rock*, 361 U.S. 516, 525 (1960) (involving the right of association).

[195] *Furman v. Georgia*, *supra*, 408 U.S. at 279-280, 300-305 (concurring opinion of Mr. Justice Brennan); *id.* at 309 (concurring opinion of Mr. Justice Stewart); *id.* at 312-313 (concurring opinion of Mr. Justice White); *id.* at 331-332, 342-359 (concurring opinion of Mr. Justice Marshall).

rehabilitation, moral reinforcement or reprobation, isolation or specific deterrence, retribution, and deterrence. It is not enough, however, that the death penalty simply implement one or more of these goals. It must be demonstrated that this uniquely harsh punishment is better fitted to the effectuation of the permissible purposes of the criminal law than other kinds of available criminal penalties.

Of the first two of these objectives, little need be said. Clearly "reformation . . . can have no application where the death penalty is exacted."[196] The imposition and execution of a death sentence are not designed to serve as instruments for the redemption of criminal offenders: to the contrary, they represent a determination that the offender is unredeemable.[197] Similarly, the moral reinforcement or reprobation function provides no substantial justification for the unique harshness of the death penalty.[198] While this

[196]ROYAL COMMISSION ON CAPITAL PUNISHMENT 1949-1953, REPORT 18 (H.M.S.O. 1953) [Cmd. 8932]. *See also* SELLIN, THE DEATH PENALTY 69-79 (1959), published as an appendix to AMERICAN LAW INSTITUTE, MODEL PENAL CODE, Tent. Draft No. 9 (May 8, 1959); KOESTLER, REFLECTIONS ON HANGING 144-152 (Amer. ed. 1957); BEDAU, THE DEATH PENALTY IN AMERICA 395-405 (rev. ed. 1967); Bedau, *Death Sentences in New Jersey 1907-1960*, 19 RUTGERS L. REV. 1, 47 (1964).

[197]*Cf.* Stephen, *Capital Punishment*, 69 FRASER'S MAGAZINE 753, 763 (1864): "When a man is hung, there is an end of our relations with him. His execution is a way of saying, 'You are not fit for this world. Take your chance elsewhere.'"

[198]*See* Ancel, *The Problem of the Death Penalty*, in SELLIN, CAPITAL PUNISHMENT 3, 16-17, 19 (1967).

objective doubtless requires that the most serious crimes be punished most seriously, "[g]rading punishments according to the severity of the crime does not require that the upper limit of severity be the death penalty."[199] This objective contains no commensurability standard whereby the relative efficacy of the death penalty and life imprisonment can be judged. A severe punishment of any kind enforces equally the restraints of the criminal law.

While the death penalty may have once been necessary to control dangerous criminals, the development of a penitentiary system in the Nineteenth Century has provided an alternative means of containing such persons.[200] Moreover, there is evidence that

[199]BEDAU, THE DEATH PENALTY IN AMERICA 268 (rev. ed. 1967).

[200]*See* Bedau, *The Courts, The Constitution, and Capital Punishment*, 1968 UTAH L. REV. 201, 232:

> "[i]n 1790, when the eighth amendment was adopted (and even more so in earlier centuries, when 'cruel and unusual punishments' were first prohibited in England) only two types of punishment were available to cope with serious offenses: death (with or without aggravations) and banishment, or 'transportation,' to the colonies or some other remote and relatively uninhabited region. Imprisonment, as something more than a mode of temporary detention prior to trial or as punishment for a minor offense, was entirely unknown at the time anywhere in Europe or America. How could anyone in 1790 sensibly have demanded that the 'evolving standards of decency' required there and then imprisonment rather than death for felons? There were no prisons, no trained custodial and administrative officers, no parole system, no statutes to authorize creating any of these, no public disposition to obtain them – in short, none of the attitudes, facilities and

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convicted murderers are less likely to engage in future criminal behavior than are other classes of offenders.[201] The execution of criminal defendants to insure their

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> personnel obviously necessary to run a system of long term incarceration. Today, of course, banishment is no alternative at all. Instead, imprisonment is an entirely commonplace practice and a viable alternative to banishment and death for every serious crime. However inhumane and brutal imprisonment may be (and there is no doubt that in practice it often is), involuntary incarceration under close supervision may still be a *necessary* 'cruelty' in most cases involving the commission of violent crimes. The undeniably greater severity of death as a punishment over imprisonment is, *ceteris paribus*, sufficient by itself to establish its greater cruelty."

There are now in this country, 4,401 state, federal and local correctional facilities employing more than 70,000 people. UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, SOURCEBOOK OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE STATISTICS 1973 108-109 (August 1973).

[201] A study of parole violation found that "[t]he percentage of Willful Homicide violators returned to prison on new commitments . . . [was], with one exception (Alcohol Laws Violations), the lowest in any offender group." Neithercutt, *Parole Violation Patterns and Commitment Offense*, 9 J. RESEARCH CRIME & DELINQ. 87, 90 (1972). The murderer has also been found to have "a lower 'criminality level' than the non-murderer [while] in the prison population." Waldo, *The "Criminality Level" of Incarcerated Murderers and Non-Murderers* 60 J. CRIM L., CRIM. & POL. SCI. 60, 70 (1970). Of twenty-six homicides committed in American prisons in 1964, only two were committed by inmates serving sentences for capital murder. Sellin, *Homicides and Assaults in American Prisons, 1964*, 31 ACTA CRIMINOLOGIAE ET MEDICINAE LEGALIS JAPONICA 139 (1965).

effective isolation from society is an excessive punishment since less drastic means now exist to protect society (and are customarily used, for example, to constrain homicide defendants whose mental condition renders them incompetent to stand trial). Although the death penalty effectuates the goal of isolation of offenders, it is an unnecessarily harsh mechanism for obtaining this result.

The fourth traditional goal of criminal punishments is retribution, the achievement of the ancient *talionis* principle.

> "The instinct for retribution is part of the nature of man, and channeling that instinct in the administration of criminal justice serves an important purpose in promoting the stability of a society governed by law. When people begin to believe that organized society is unwilling or unable to impose upon criminal offenders the punishment they 'deserve,' then there are sown the seeds of anarchy – of self-help, vigilante justice, and lynch law."

Furman v. Georgia, supra, 408 U.S. at 308 (concurring opinion of Mr. Justice Stewart). The question of how far retribution, standing alone, is a legitimate goal of the criminal law in the mid-1970's is a complex one; but this case does not present that question for decision, since the death penalty as it is administered under the *Waddell* decree is not retributive in any meaningful way:

> "the issue . . . is not . . . whether it is fair or just that one who takes another person's life should lose his own. Whatever you think about that proposition it is clear that we do not and cannot act upon it generally in the administration of the penal law. The problem rather is whether a small

and highly random sample of people who commit murder or other comparably serious offenses ought to be despatched, while most of those convicted of such crimes are dealt with by imprisonment."[202]

The concept of retribution requires both a factual equivalency and a procedural regularity in the imposition of punishment[203] which are simply not present in the administration of the death penalty for first degree murder, as we have demonstrated in Part II *supra*. While the *Waddell* death penalty might be sought to be justified indirectly in light of a retributive goal as a device to forestall private acts of vengeance, there is no empirical evidence that lynch law increases as executions decline. In fact, the relation between the lynching rate and the execution rate appears to be more one of direct than inverse proportionality, as the following statistics demonstrate:

	Known Executions[204]	
Decade	Legal	Illegal
1890's	1,214	1,540
1900's	1,176	885
1910's	1,031	621
1920's	1,162	315
1930's	1,667	130
1940's	1,284	5
1950's	717	2[205]

[202]Professor Herbert Wechsler, in *Symposium on Capital Punishment*, 7 N.Y.L.F. 249, 255 (1961).

[203]*See also* Sellin, *The Inevitable End of Capital Punishment*, in SELLIN, CAPITAL PUNISHMENT 239, 243 (1967):

"if we conservatively assume that there are now about 2500 capital murders annually in the United States and but seven executions, it is obvious that a life for a life is rarely taken."

[204]BOWERS, EXECUTIONS IN AMERICA 40 (1974).

[205]Available data on illegal executions ended in 1956 *Ibid.*

There is yet another sense in which the death penalty can be said to bear no meaningful relation to the goal of retribution, for the *lex talionis* affords no commensurability standard. The attempts of various post-*Furman* statutes to authorize the death penalty for "outrageously or wantonly vile, horrible or inhuman" killings[206] attest to this difficulty. For surely there is no retributive logic to justify the simple asphyxiation or electrocution of a defendant who has committed an atrocious crime: such a crime demands a far harsher punishment (under this logic) than the "mere extinguishment of life," *Ex parte Kemmler*, 136 U.S. 436, 447 (1890) But such punishments are clearly forbidden by the Eighth Amendment. With these constitutional limitations, it cannot be asserted that any particular penalty is more supportable by a retributive purpose than any other penalty.

The most frequently voiced justification for the death penalty is the deterrence of capital crimes However, as the empirical findings collected in Appendix E to this brief, pp. 1e-10e *infra*, conclusively demonstrate, there is no credible evidence – despite the most exhaustive inquiry into the subject – that the death

[206]Ga. Code § 27-2534.1 (1) (7) (1973). *See* Appendix A, p. 22a *infra*.

penalty is a deterrent superior to lesser punishments.[207] The conclusions set forth in Appendix E may be briefly summarized. Official and scholarly inquiries have concluded overwhelmingly that use or disuse of the death penalty has no effect upon the frequency of criminal homicide. This conclusion is based on the following statistical evidence.

> Death penalty jurisdictions do not have a lower rate of criminal homicide than abolition jurisdictions.
>
> Given two states otherwise similar in factors that might affect homicide rates, and differing in that one employs capital punishment while the other does not, the abolition state does not show any consistently higher rate of criminal homicide.

[207]The few published claims of deterrent efficacy are based upon impressionistic accounts of law enforcement officers and do not explain the failure of the death penalty to affect crime rates. *See, e.g.*, Hoover, *Statements in Favor of the Death Penalty*, in BEDAU, THE DEATH PENALTY IN AMERICA 130 (rev. ed. 1967); Allen, *Capital Punishment: Your Protection and Mine*, in BEDAU, THE DEATH PENALTY IN AMERICA 135 (rev. ed. 1967). We know of only one research-based claim of the deterrent efficacy of the death penalty. It is based upon unpublished findings but has been alluded to in a recent article as "indicat[ing] that each execution prevents between 8 and 20 murders." Tullock, *Does Punishment Deter Crime?*, THE PUBLIC INTEREST No. 36 103, 108 (1974), referring to Ehrlich, *The Deterrent Effect of Capital Punishment: A Question of Life and Death*, "to be published" in THE AMERICAN ECONOMIC REVIEW, *id.*, at 111. Tullock goes on to say that: ". . . unfortunately, the data available for this study were not what one would hope for, so not as much reliance can be put upon [the] . . . results as one normally would give to work by such a sophisticated econometrician." *Id.* at 108.

> In jurisdictions which abolish the death penalty, abolition has no influence on the rate of criminal homicide.
>
> Jurisdictions which reintroduce the death penalty after having abolished it do not show a decreased rate of criminal homicide after reintroduction.
>
> Prisoners and prison personnel do not suffer a higher rate of criminal assault and homicide from life-term prisoners in abolition jurisdictions than in death penalty jurisdictions.

The same conclusion has been reached with regard to the "mandatory" death penalty; "no indication" has been found "that the mandatory death penalty [is] . . . a more effective deterrent of homicide than discretionary capital punishment."[208]

These findings are not surprising. For, in the first place, "crimes are committed for reasons other than a rational weighing of consequences."[209] And, in the second place, the very aberrational, violent behavior to which the death penalty is now exclusively applied is less deterrable than any other human behavior, whether the sanction is death or imprisonment:

> "[t]he deterrence argument requires that man be an essentially rational being, weighing all the possible consequences of his acts and rating the desirability of each possible consequence. Whether or not this view of man is generally true is

[208]BOWERS, EXECUTIONS IN AMERICA 160 (1974).

[209]Brief *Amicus Curiae* of the Committee of Psychiatrists for Evaluation of the Death Penalty, in *Aikens v. California*, 406 U.S. 813 [No. 68-5027] pp. 6-7.

debatable, but in the instance of murderers it is most certainly untrue."[210]

C. Public Acceptance of the Penalty of Death

Against the background of this evidence that the death penalty is excessive and unserviceable in terms of

[210]KAKOULLIS, THE MYTHS OF CAPITAL PUNISHMENT 2 (*CENTER FOR RESPONSIBLE PSYCHOLOGY, BROOKLYN COLLEGE*, C.U.N.Y., Report No. 13, 1974). *See also* Chambliss, *Types of Deviance and the Effectiveness of Legal Sanctions*, 1967 WISC. L. REV. 703; FATTAH, A STUDY OF THE DETERRENT EFFECT OF CAPITAL PUNISHMENT WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE CANADIAN SITUATION 31-38 (Department of the Solicitor General, Canada, Research Centre Report No. 2, 1972). Indeed, there is strong evidence that the death penalty may service to *incite* murder. It has been reported that in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries there was an "epidemic of indirect suicides [in Norway and Denmark] . . . when depressed people committed murder in order to be put to death . . . ." *Id.* at 39. In both countries laws were passed specifically exempting such people from the death penalty. "The law passed in Denmark in 1767 abandoned the death penalty in cases where melancholy and other dimal persons (committed murder) for the exclusive purpose of losing their lives." *Ibid.* Moreover, there is evidence that even the limited publicity surrounding an execution "has a 'brutalizing' effect on the population that more than offset[s] any deterrent effects" by causing an increase in the incidence of homicide in the periods immediately surrounding executions. BOWERS, EXECUTIONS IN AMERICA 20 (1974). *See also* Glaser & Zeigler, *Use of the Death Penalty v. Outrage at Murder*, 20 CRIME & DELINQ. 333 (1974).

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the legitimate goals of the criminal justice system, we ask the Court to look again at the use society has made of it. For although the facts warrant a judicial judgment of excessiveness, the Court need not rely solely on its own appraisal of them. Society itself has pronounced a judgment, by its actions if not by its words. That judgment is that the penalty of death is both excessive and unacceptable.

To be sure, thirty jurisdictions have enacted death-penalty legislation since *Furman* (narrower, in all but two cases, than their pre-*Furman* authorizations of capital punishment).[211] But, in every case, the legislature has preserved or created a wide range of selective mechanisms by which the death penalty can be avoided in most cases. Some States have expressly conferred life-or-death sentencing discretion upon capital juries, to be exercised pursuant to standards that purport to confine such discretion but do not do so in fact.[212] Other States allow escape from "mandatory" death penalties through a variety of preconviction and postconviction outlets like those of North Carolina which we have described in Part II at pp. 45-100 *supra*. In this setting at least, the number of legislative authorizations is not – as *Furman* properly held – an appropriate test of acceptability of a harsh punishment. For acceptability is measured by what an enlightened public conscience will allow the law actually to do, not what it will permit a statute to threaten vaguely.[213] And

[211]See note 15, *supra*; Appendix A, pp. 42a-43a, 55a *infra*.

[212]*See* Petition for Writ of Certiorari, *Eberheart v. Georgia*, No. 74-5174 (filed August 19, 1974) pp. 32-36.

[213]"The objective indicator of society's view of an unusually severe punishment is what society does with it . . . ." *Furman v. Georgia*, *supra*, 408 U.S. at 300 (concurring opinion of Mr. Justice Brennan).

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the authors of even purportedly "mandatory" legislation – legislation written to be administered through discretionary judgments of prosecutors, judges, juries, and the Governor – can hardly be unaware that they are not in fact ordaining death except in a fraction of the cases covered by the statute.[214] Prosecutors may be relied upon to "avoid the unacceptably rigorous application of the letter of the law"[215] by filing and accepting pleas to non-capital charges[216] with the

[214] *Cf.* Vidmar & Ellsworth, *Public Opinion and the Death Penalty*, 26 STAN. L. REV. 1245, 1252 (1974):

> "[a]s reported previously, a substantial 59 percent of the public now favors capital punishment in principle. No more than 39 percent of the same persons, however, could say, 'If guilt were proven, I could always vote guilty even though the defendant would automatically receive the death penalty.' Another 16 percent agreed with the statement, 'I could never vote guilty, even if guilt were proven, knowing that the defendant would automatically receive the death penalty.' And a larger percent agreed that, 'I could not say in all cases, even if guilt were proven, that I would vote guilty, knowing the defendant would automatically receive the death penalty.'
>
> Thus, by 49-39 percent, the American people indicate that in actual practice they would individually oppose the automatic imposition of the death penalty if a person were proven guilty of a crime such as murder.
>
> The clear implication of these results is that while people feel that capital punishment is the most effective deterrent to crimes that take the life of other persons, there should be much latitude in the way the death sentence is handed out. The public wants to have the death penalty on the books, but would use it sparingly and by no means as an automatic punishment for a capital crime."

[215] *See* text at note 91 *supra*.

[216] *See* pp. 45-61 *supra*.

acquiescence (where required) of trial judges.[217] Juries can be counted on to make sentencing decisions "under the guise of resolving issues of evidential doubt."[218] At the end of the judicial process, the Governor may be expected to provide "an outlet from the rigorous inflexibility"[219] of "mandatory" capital punishment.

We are left, then, with the history of the past as prelude to the future. What that history shows is a rejection of the death penalty that "could hardly be more complete without becoming absolute."[220] Given a choice of punishing "capital" offenders by death or something less, American systems of criminal justice have chosen against death for all but a scant handful of offenders.

> "Although the number cannot be determined with precision, no one can doubt that in each of the

[217] *See* pp. 57,61 *supra*.

[218] KALVEN & ZEISEL, THE AMERICAN JURY 427 (1966). We have seen, indeed, that jury acquittals motivated by a desire to avoid capital punishment under "mandatory" sentencing schemes provided a major impetus for the replacement of those schemes with overtly "discretionary" ones during the late Nineteenth and early Twentieth Centuries. *See* note 133 *supra*. *Cf.* Mackey, *The Inutility of Mandatory Capital Punishment: An Historical Note*, 54 B.U.L. REV. 32, 35 (1974):

> "[a]ntebellum Americans ... whose experience with mandatory capital punishment was extensive, tended to account it a dangerous failure. They were satisfied that mandatory capital punishment did indeed have a deterrent effect; it deterred jurors from convicting palpably guilty men."

[219] *See* text at note 148 *supra*.

[220] *Furman v. Georgia*, *supra*, 408 U.S. at 300 (concurring opinion of Mr. Justice Brennan).

> years involved [1930-1959], with executions ranging from 199 to 48, there were literally thousands of prosecutions that could legally have ended in a capital judgment.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> The conclusion . . . is inescapable that punishment of death is inflicted in the United States on a bare sample of the culprits whose conduct makes them eligible for its imposition . . . .
>
> [T]his experience reveals a deep reluctance in our culture to employ the final sanction. . . ."[221]

This reluctance "to impose or authorize the carrying out of a death sentence"[222] is the more eloquent because of the context in which it has occurred. For it is fair to say that the conditions of administration of capital punishment during the past several decades have been such as to promote its public acceptability to the fullest extent consistent with its nature and the tenor of the public conscience. In the first place, every American execution since 1936 has taken place in secret, isolated by law from the public eye and

[221]Professor Herbert Wechsler, in *Symposium on Capital Punishment*, 7 N.Y.L. F. 249, 252-253 (1961).

[222]PRESIDENT'S COMMISSION ON LAW ENFORCEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE, REPORT: THE CHALLENGE OF CRIME IN A FREE SOCIETY 143 (G.P.O. 1967).

conscience.[223] Indeed, there are but a handful of people in this Nation who have witnessed an execution and can speak with authority to the proposition that:

> ". . . if people were to witness the decay of the waiting man, to hear his cries and watch his final struggles, they would be affronted in their consciences, and in their standards of humanity and of human dignity and decency."[224]

The rarity and secrecy of executions account for the fact that, although it is everywhere agreed that the cruelty of a death sentence is such that its imposition requires extraordinary justification, the wealth of research and theoretical debate on the subject of capital punishment is largely ignored. The often noted fact that ". . . American citizens know almost nothing about capital punishment"[225] reflects two circumstances: we

[223]The first American State to abolish public executions was Pennsylvania, in 1834. *See* Filler, *Movements to Abolish the Death Penalty in the United States*, 284 ANNALS 124, 127 (1952). Public execution terminated in England in 1868, *see* TUTTLE, THE CRUSADE AGAINST CAPITAL PUNISHMENT IN GREAT BRITAIN 20 (1961); and such executions were progressively outlawed in the United States throughout the Nineteenth Century, *see* BYE, CAPITAL PUNISHMENT IN THE UNITED STATES 6 (1919). The last public execution in the country seems to have occurred in Kentucky in 1936. BARNES & TEETERS, NEW HORIZONS IN CRIMINOLOGY 307 (3rd ed. 1959).

[224]Gottlieb, *Capital Punishment*, 15 CRIME & DELINQ. 1, 6 (1969). *See* West, *Medicine and Capital Punishment*, in *Hearings Before the Subcommittee on Criminal Laws and Procedures of the Senate Committee on the Judiciary*, 90th Cong. 2d Sess., on S. 1760, *To Abolish the Death Penalty* (March 20-21 and July 2, 1968) 124, 125 (G.P.O. 1970).

[225]*Furman v. Georgia*, *supra*, 408 U.S. at 362 (concurring opinion of Mr. Justice Marshall) (citing Gold, *A Psychiatric Review of Capital Punishment*, 6 J. FORENSIC SCI. 465, 466 (1961); KOESTLER, REFLECTIONS ON HANGING 164 (Amer. ed. 1957); and DUFFY & HIRSHBERG, 88 MEN AND 2 WOMEN 257-258 (1962)).

are protected by disuse and by official secrecy from its reality; and, as a consequence, there is no incentive to examine rigorously its justifiability.

But the death penalty also knows a different and less innocent kind of isolation from public consciousness and conscience. It is a fact of human nature that we respond more readily to wrongs committed against those with whom we identify – those most like ourselves in appearance, background and mores. Conversely, wrongs we would not tolerate when done to our own kith or kind are tolerable when inflicted on those we despise or can ignore. The strong extant evidence and observations that the death penalty has been disproportionately applied to racial minorities[226]

[226]Racial discrimination in the imposition of capital punishment has been borne out in a number of discrete and limited but careful studies. Johnson, *The Negro and Crime*, 217 ANNALS 93 (1941); Garfinkel, *Research Note on Inter- and Intra-Racial Homicides*, 27 SOCIAL FORCES 369 (1949); Johnson, *Selective Factors in Capital Punishment*, 36 SOCIAL FORCES 165 (1957); Wolfgang, Kelly & Nolde, *Comparison of the Executed and the Commuted Among Admissions to Death Row*, 53 J. CRIM. L., CRIM. & POL. SCI. 301 (1962); Bedau, *Death Sentences in New Jersey 1907-1960*, 19 RUTGERS L. REV. 1, 18-21, 52-53 (1964). Moreover, it has seemed apparent to responsible commissions and individuals studying the administration of the death penalty in this country. PRESIDENT'S COMMISSION ON LAW ENFORCEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE, REPORT: THE CHALLENGE OF CRIME IN A FREE SOCIETY 143 (G.P.O. 1967); PENNSYLVANIA, JOINT LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE ON CAPITAL PUNISHMENT, REPORT 14-15 (1961); UNITED NATIONS, DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS, CAPITAL PUNISHMENT (ST/SOA/SD/9-10) 32, 98 (1968); BEDAU, THE DEATH PENALTY IN AMERICA 411-413 (rev. ed. 1967); CLARK, CRIME IN AMERICA 335 (1970); MATTICK, THE UNEXAMINED DEATH 5, 17 (1966); WOLFGANG & COHEN, CRIME AND RACE: CONCEPTIONS AND MISCONCEPTIONS 77, 80-81 (1970); Hartung, *Trends in the Use of Capital Punishment*, 284 ANNALS 8, 14-17 (1952); Bedau, *A Social Philosopher Looks at the Death*

and to the poor[227] therefore cannot be ignored in

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Penalty, 123 AM. J. PSYCHIATRY 1361, 1362 (1967); *and see* Rubin, *Disparity and Equality of Sentences – A Constitutional Challenge*, 40 F.R.D. 55, 66-68 (1967); BOWERS, EXECUTIONS IN AMERICA 71-120 (1974); Auerbach, *Common Myths About Capital Criminals and Their Victims*, 3 GEORGIA J. CORRECTIONS 41 (1974). Evidence of discrimination has been equally strong when the sentencing systems under study were ostensibly mandatory:

> "... although we have no empirical evidence that the mandatory death penalty is superior to discretionary sentencing as a deterrent to murder, we have seen that it has been associated with higher levels of execution, with comparable levels of racial discrimination, and, very likely, with reduced levels of capital convictions. In view of this evidence, it would appear that the adoption of the mandatory death penalty would mean a greater sacrifice of human life, continued discrimination against blacks, and the inability to convict some guilty offenders, without any deterrent benefit."

BOWERS, *op. cit. supra*, at 162; *see also* Garfinkel, *supra*.

The following are the total numbers of persons executed between 1930 and 1970, broken down by offense and race, as they appear in UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, BUREAU OF PRISONS, NATIONAL PRISONER STATISTICS, Bulletin No. 46, *Capital Punishment 1930-1970* 12 (August, 1971):

	Murder	Rape	Other	Total
White	1664(49.9%)	48(10.5%)	39(55.7%)	1751(45.4%)
Negro	1630(48.9%)	405(89.1%)	31(44.3%)	2066(53.5%)
Other	40(1.2%)	2(0.4%)	0(0.0%)	42(1.1%)
	3334 (100%)	455(100%)	70(100%)	3859(100%)

[227]"It is the poor, the sick, the ignorant, the powerless and the hated who are executed." CLARK, CRIME IN AMERICA 335 (1970). See DUFFY & HIRSHBERG, 88 MEN AND 2

(continued)

assessing the quality of such acceptance as the penalty has had. For present purposes, it matters little whether these disproportions are the result of discrimination, passive lack of empathy, inadequacy of defense resources 228, or some more benign explanations. The very fact of the disproportion means that public response

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WOMEN 256-257 (1962); LAWES, TWENTY THOUSAND YEARS IN SING SING 302 (1932); LAWES, LIFE AND DEATH IN SING SING 155 (1928); WEIHOFEN, THE URGE TO PUNISH 164-165 (1956); West, *Medicine and Capital Punishment*, in *Hearings Before the Subcommittee on Criminal Laws and Procedures of the Senate Committee on the Judiciary*, 90th Cong., 2d Sess., on S. 1760, *To Abolish the Death Penalty* (March 20-21 and July 2, 1968) 124, 125 (G.P.O. 1970); McGee, *Capital Punishment as Seen by a Correctional Administrator*, 28 FED. PROB. (No. 2) 11, 12 (1964).

The characteristics of the inmates of death row are described in Bedau, *Death Sentences in New Jersey 1907-1960*, 19 RUTGERS L. REV. 1 (1964); Bedau, *Capital Punishment in Oregon, 1903-1964*, 45 ORE. L. REV. 1 (1965); Carter & Smith, *The Death Penalty in California: A Statistical and Composite Portrait*, 15 CRIME & DELINQ. 62 (1969); Johnson, *Selective Factors in Capital Punishment*, 36 SOCIAL FORCES 165 (1957); Koeninger, *Capital Punishment in Texas, 1924-1968*, 15 CRIME & DELINQ. 132 (1969). *And see* Brief for the N.A.A.C.P. Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc., and the National Office for the Rights of the Indigent, as *Amici Curiae*, in *Boykin v. Alabama*, 395 U.S. 238 (1969) [O.T. 1968, No. 642], p. 7 n.8.

[228]For a review of the disadvantages under which defense of an indigent, low or moderate income person must be conducted, *see* Goldberg, *Equality and Governmental Action*, 39 N.Y.U.L. REV. 205, 218-224 (1964).

to the enormity of the decision to kill a fellow human being is blunted. To the average citizen and the citizen of influence, death remains a penalty for *them*, not for *us*.

At this point, description of the acceptance of capital punishment by contemporary society becomes appropriately cyclical. For infrequent, racially and socially disproportionate application of the death penalty is maintained by the very attitudes it has helped to create. A harsh penalty, unacceptable in general application, is inflicted on the powerless and the unpopular while more sympathetic and attractive classes of defendants are spared. Thus applied, the residue of the penalty is acceptable to the public, which feels no pressure to restrict its broad availability on the statute books. The broad availability of the penalty in turn creates consistent pressure upon prosecutors, jurors, judges, and Governors, to take advantage of a variety of selective mechanisms to avert the punishment from all but an impotent and anonymous few.

This pattern of use, in turn, makes the justifications of capital punishment even more hollow. Reluctant, unpredictable and spotty application of the death penalty deprives it of the least capacity to serve its supposed penal functions. As a deterrent, it is wholly incredible; as a disabler, it is as useless and fortuitous as it is unnecessary; as an instrument of retribution, it is inadequate, haphazard, and unjust. The few men whom it kills die for no reason; they are executed "in the name of a theory in which the executioners do not believe."[229] Distaste for the penalty grows, and fewer men are killed as society "watch[es] without impatience its gradual disappearance."[230]

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[229]Camus, *Reflections on the Guillotine*, in CAMUS, RESISTANCE, REBELLION AND DEATH 131, 141 (Mod. Lib. 1963).

[230]Ancel, *The Problem of the Death Penalty*, in SELLIN, CAPITAL PUNISHMENT 3 (1967).

The cycle can be broken only if the Eighth Amendment is employed in its most vital and essential function: to assure that principles of human decency are universally enforced, even – and especially – where rare and random application of a punishment makes their occasional violation virtually invisible except to the condemned.

CONCLUSION

Petitioner's death sentence is a cruel and unusual punishment forbidden by the Eighth and Fourteenth Amendments. The judgment of the North Carolina Supreme Court should therefore be reversed.

Respectfully submitted,

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Appendix C:

North Carolina Defendants
Presently Under Sentence
of Death.

North Carolina Defendants Sentenced to Death Under The Procedure Established by State v. Waddell, 282 N.C. 431, 194 S.E.2d 19 (1973):

Alton James Henderson v. North Carolina, U.S. Sup. Ct. No. 73-6883 (filed June 8, 1974)(first degree burglary and rape); opinion below 285 N.C. 1, 203 S.E.2d 10 (1974);

David Earl Dillard v. North Carolina, U.S. Sup. Ct. No. 74-6875 (filed June 11, 1974)(first degree murder); opinion below 285 N.C. 72, 203 S.E.2d 6 (1974);

Tommy Noell v. North Carolina, U.S. Sup. Ct. No. 73-6876 (filed June 11, 1974); opinion below 284 N.C. 670, 202 S.E.2d 750(1974);

Henry N. Jarrette v. North Carolina, U.S. Sup. Ct. No. 73-6877 (filed June 11, 1974)(first degree murder and rape); opinion below 204 N.C. 625, 202 S.E.2d 724 (1974);

Albert Crowder, Jr. v. North Carolina, U.S. Sup. Ct. No. 73-6878 (filed June 11, 1974)(first degree murder); opinion below 285 N.C. 42, 203 S.E.2d 38 (1974);

Jesse Thurman Fowler v. North Carolina, U.S. Sup. Ct. No. 73-7031 (cert. granted October 29, 1974); opinion below 285 N.C. 90, 203 S.E.2d 803 (1974);

Billy Honeycutt v. North Carolina, U.S. Sup. Ct. No. 73-7032 (filed July 9, 1974)(first degree murder); opinion below 288 N.C. 184, 203 S.E.2d 844 (1974);

Kelly Dean Sparks v. North Carolina, U.S. Sup. Ct. No. 74-669 (filed November 29, 1974)(first degree murder); opinion below __N.C.__, 207 S.E.2d 71 (1974);

Mamie Lee Ward v. North Carolina, U.S. Sup. Ct. No. 74-6263 (filed March 28, 1975)(first degree murder); opinion below 286 N.C. 304, 210 S.E.2d 407 (1974);

Reginald Renard Lampkins v. North Carolina, U.S. Sup. Ct. No. 74-6673 (filed June 9, 1975)(rape); opinion below 286 N.C. 497, 212 S.E.2d 106 (1975);

John Richard Stegmann v. North Carolina, U.S. Sup. Ct. No. 74-6735 (filed June 26, 1975)(rape); opinion below 286 N.C. 638, 213 S.E.2d 262 (1975);

Richard Gordon v. North Carolina, U.S. Sup. Ct. No. 74-6733 (filed June 26, 1975)(first degree murder); opinion below 287 N.C. 118, 213 S.E.2d 708 (1975);

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Crawford Dean Lowery v. North Carolina, U.S. Sup. Ct. No. 75-5032 (filed July 7, 1975)(rape); opinion below 286 N.C. 698, 213 S.E.2d 255 (1975);

George Vick v. North Carolina, U.S. Sup. Ct. No. 755075 (filed July 11, 1975)(rape); opinion below 287 N.C. 37, 213 S.E.2d 335(1975);

Ernest Armstrong v. North Carolina, U.S. Sup. Ct. No. 75-5076 (filed July 11, 1975)(rape); opinion below __N.C.__, 212 S.E.2d 894 (1975);

Alexander McLaughlin v. North Carolina, U.S. Sup. Ct. No. 75-5077 (filed July 11, 1975)(first degree murder and rape); opinion below __N.C.__, 213 S.E.2d 238 (1975);

Vernon Junior Woods v. North Carolina, U.S. Sup. Ct. No. 75-5091 (filed July 14, 1975)(first degree murder and rape); opinion below 286 N.C. 612, 213 S.E.2d 214 (1975);

Ernest Ray Simmons v. North Carolina, U.S. Sup. Ct. No. 75-5262 (filed August 12, 1975)(first degree murder); opinion below __N.C.__, 213 S.E.2d 280 (1975);

Ronnie Young v. North Carolina, U.S. Sup. Ct. No 75-5281 (filed August 15, 1975)(first degree murder); opinion below 287 N.C. 377, 214 S.E.2d 763 (1975);

Ernest John Vinson v. North Carolina, U.S. Sup. Ct. No. 75-5384 (filed September 3, 1975)(rape); opinion below N.C. Sup. Ct. No. 48, Wilson County (June 6, 1975);

Timothy Wesley Robbins v. North Carolina, U.S. Sup. Ct. No. 75-5424 (filed September 12, 1975)(first degree murder); opinion below __N.C.__, 214 S.E.2d 756 (1975);

Albert Carey v. North Carolina, (first degree murder) N.C. Sup. Ct. No. 67, Mecklenburg County (Spring Term 1975);

State v. Bryant Henry Williams, Jr. __N.C.__, 212 S.E.2d 113 (1975)(rape);

State v. George James Patterson, N.C. Sup. Ct. No. 29, Forsyth County (Fall Term 1974)(first degree murder);

State v. James Avery, __N.C.__, 212 S.E.2d 142 (1975)(first degree murder);

State v. Robert Gary Bock, Moore County Super. Ct. No. 73-CR-6324 (March 8, 1974)(first degree murder);

State v. Charles D. Thompson, N.C. Sup. Ct. No. 41, Rutherford County (June 6, 1975)(first degree murder);

State v. Wayne Foddrell, Caswell County Super. Ct. No. 73-CR-1439 (June 7, 1974)(rape);

State v. Rozell Qendine Hunt, Anson County Sup. Ct. No. 74-CR-1538 (June 13, 1974)(first degree murder);

State v. Tharroy Davis, Lenoir County Super. Ct. Nos. 74-CR-1102, 74-CR-1103 (June 16, 1974)(first degree murder);

State v. Joseph Clinton Foster, Lenoir County Super. Ct. Nos. 74-CR-1248, 74-CR-1249 (June 16, 1974)(first degree murder);

State v. Thurman Lee Strickland, Onslow County Super. Ct. Nos. 74-CR-3671, 74-CR-3672, 74-CR-10568 (June 29, 1974)(first degree murder);

State v. Thomas Lee King, Gaston County Super. Ct. No. 74-CR-4357 (August 1, 1974)(first degree murder);

State v. Joseph King, Gaston County Super. Ct. No. 74-CR-4358 (August 1, 1974)(first degree murder);

State v. Roger Lawrence Wetmore, __N.C.__, 215 S.E.2d 51 (1975) (first degree murder);

State v. James Edward Britt, Robeson County Super. Ct. No. 73-CR-6567 (September 20, 1974)(first degree murder);

State v. Larry Bernard, New Hanover County Super. Ct. No. 73-CR-20420 (October 3, 1974)(rape);

State v. Bobby Clinton Foster, Mecklenburg County Sup. Ct. Nos. 74-CR-1600, 74-CR-1601 (November 22, 1974)(first degree murder);

State v. Pinkney Thomas Mitchell, Jr., Gaston County Super. Ct. No. 74-CR-9519 (October 30, 1974)(first degree murder);

State v. Vernon R. Walters, Halifax County Super. Ct. No. 74-CR-4144 (November 24, 1974)(first degree murder);

State v. Cardell Spaulding, Halifax County Super.Ct. No. 74-CR-4142 (November 24, 1974)(first degree murder);

State v. James A. Bush, Onslow County Super. Ct. Nos. 74-CR-22494, 74-CR-22495, 74-CR-22496 (May 22, 1975)(first degree murder);

State v. Lawrence McCall, Transylvania County Super. Ct. No. 73-CR-1825 (June 7, 1975)(first degree murder);

State v. Edward McKenna, Wake County Super. Ct. No. 75-CR-25872 (July 12, 1975)(first degree murder);

State v. David D. Smith, Mecklenburg County Super. Ct. No. 74-CR-1598, 1599 (November 22, 1974)(first degree murder).

North Carolina Defendants Sentenced to Death Under the Procedures Established by N. C. Session Laws 1973 (2nd sess. 1974) c. 1201, §1, amending N.C. Gen. Stat. §14-17 (1974 cum. supp.):

State v. Henry A. Tatum, Durham County Super. Ct., 74-CR-16919 (July 21, 1974)(first degree murder);

State v. Ted Carter, Gaston County Super. Ct., 74-CR-18028 (August 2, 1974)(first degree murder);

State v. Varas B. Shader, Onslow County Super. Ct., 74-CR-15759 (August 18, 1974)(first degree murder);

State v. Wallace C. Lanford, Gaston County Super. Ct., 74-CR-9539 (October 30, 1974)(first degree murder);

State v. Larry C. Clark, Catawba County Super. Ct., 74-CR-13140 (October 31, 1974)(first degree rape);

State v. Artis McClain, Catawba County Super. Ct., 74-CR-13138 (October 31, 1974)(first degree rape);

State v. Carl Miller, Catawba County Super. Ct., 74-CR-13135 (October 31, 1974)(first degree rape);

State v. Joe Lee Cobbs, Halifax County Super. Ct., 74-CR-4143 (November 24, 1974)(first degree murder);

State v. James Woodson, Harnett County Super. Ct., 74-CR-5054 (December 9, 1974)(first degree murder);

State v. Luby Waxton, Harnett County Super. Ct., 74-CR-5058 (December 9, 1974)(first degree murder);

State v. James Junior Biggs, Chowan County Super. Ct., 75-CR-1096 (January 25, 1975)(first degree murder);

State v. Allen Roberts, Durham County Super. Ct., 75-CR-12595 (February 12, 1975)(first degree rape);

State v. D.C. Cawthorne, Onslow County Super. Ct., 75-CR-22418 (February 24, 1975)(first degree murder);

State v. Willie F. McZorn, Moore County Super. Ct., 75-CR-0576 (March 5, 1975)(first degree murder);

State v. Larry A. Waddell, Mecklenburg County Super. Ct., 75-CR-703 (March 12, 1975)(first degree murder);

State v. Alfred J. Jones, Lenoir County Super. Ct., 75-CR-1032 (March 19, 1975)(first degree murder);

State v. Edward Davis, Buncombe County Super. Ct., 74-CR-21567 (March 20, 1975)(first degree murder);

State v. Robert Griffin, Jones County Super. Ct., 74-CR-1511 (March 27, 1975)(first degree murder);

State v. John T. Alford, Mecklenburg County Super. Ct., 74-CR-70358 (April 9, 1975)(first degree murder);

State v. Sherman Carter, Mecklenburg County Super. Ct., 74-CR-70366 (April 9, 1975)(first degree murder);

State v. Waymon Harris, Rockingham County Super. Ct., 75-CR-1577C (April 17, 1975)(first degree murder);

State v. James D. Harrill, Rutherford County Super. Ct., 75-CR-066D (May 16, 1975)(first degree murder);

State v. Coleman Covington, Robeson County Super. Ct., 74-CR-18381 (May 19, 1975)(first degree murder);

State v. James McEachin, Robeson County Super. Ct., 74-CR-18381 (May 19, 1975)(first degree murder);

State v. Leroy Richardson, Robeson County Super. Ct., 74-CR-18378 (May 19, 1975)(first degree murder);

State v. David Nicholson, Robeson County Super. Ct., 74-CR-18382 (May 19, 1975)(first degree murder);

State v. Michael Peplinski, Robeson County Super. Ct., 75-CR-1275 (June 8, 1975)(first degree murder);

State v. Willie McEachin, Robeson County Super. Ct., 75-CR-2366 (June 16, 1975)(first degree rape);

State v. Robert L. Thompson, Robeson County Super. Ct., 75-CR-2180 (June 16, 1975)(first degree rape);

State v. George Phifer, Beaufort County Super. Ct., 75-CR-434 (June 26, 1975)(first degree murder);

State v. Johnny Lawrence, Beaufort County Super. Ct., 75-CR-436 (June 26, 1975)(first degree murder);

State v. Hillary Boyce, Beaufort County Super. Ct., 75-CR-435 (June 26, 1975)(first degree murder);

State v. Dewie L. Gray, Mecklenburg County Super. Ct., 75-CR-2774(June 26, 1975)(first degree rape);

State v. Elzie Lee McCall, Transylvania County Super. Ct., 75-CR-204 (July 11, 1975)(first degree murder);

State v. Willard Warren, Haywood County Super. Ct., 75-CR-1286 (July 12, 1975)(first degree murder);

State v. Charles Alvin, Montgomery County Super. Ct., 75-CR-614 (July 25, 1975)(first degree murder);

State v. James C. Johnson, Montgomery County Super. Ct., 75-CR-631 (July 25, 1975)(first degree murder);

State v. McKinley Williams, Halifax County Super. Ct., 75-CR-808 (August 6, 1975)(first degree murder);

State v. Tamarcus Swift, Wayne County Super. Ct., 75-CR-6754 (August 22, 1975)(first degree murder);

State v. Victor Foust,Wilson County Super. Ct., 75-CR-2025 (August 28, 1975)(first degree murder);

State v. William Earl Matthews, Wilson County Super. Ct., 75-CR-2022 (August 28, 1975)(first degree murder);

State v. David Earl Locklear, Robeson County Super. Ct., 75-CR-1274 (September 11, 1975)(first degree murder);

State v. Gregory James Taylor, Mecklenburg County Super. Ct., 75-CR- (September 11, 1975)(first degree murder);

State v. Harry F. Hammonds, Anson County Super. Ct., 75-CR-2618 (September 11, 1975)(first degree murder).

IN THE

SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES

October Term, 1975

No. 75-5491

JAMES TYRONE WOODSON and LUBY WAXTON,
Petitioners,

-v-

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA,
Respondent.

ON WRIT OF CERTIORARI
TO THE
SUPREME COURT OF NORTH CAROLINA

RESPONSE OF RESPONDENT, STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA, IN OPPOSITION TO PETITION FOR WRIT OF CERTIORARI

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SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES

October Term, 1975

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Petitioners,

-v-

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA,
Respondent.

ON WRIT OF CERTIORARI
TO THE
SUPREME COURT OF NORTH CAROLINA

RESPONSE OF RESPONDENT,
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA,
IN OPPOSITION TO
PETITION FOR WRIT OF CERTIORARI

CITATION TO OPINION BELOW

The opinion of the Supreme Court of North Carolina is reported at _____ N.C. _____, 215 S.E.2d 607 (1975).

JURISDICTION

Petitioner seeks to invoke the jurisdiction of this Court pursuant to 28 USC §1257(3).

QUESTION PRESENTED

1 Whether the imposition and carrying out of the sentence of death for the crime of murder under the law of North Carolina violates the Eighth or Fourteenth Amendments to the Constitution of the United States?

STATEMENT OF THE CASE

The petitioners have filed with this Court a Petition for a Writ of Certiorari to review the judgment of the Supreme Court of North Carolina, filed on June 26, 1975, affirming the conviction and death sentence of both Woodson and Waxton. The sentence of death was imposed under North Carolina General Statutes 15-144 for the murder of Mrs. Shirley Whittington Butler.

ARGUMENT

THE COURT SHOULD NOT GRANT CERTIORARI TO CONSIDER WHETHER THE IMPOSITION AND THE CARRYING OUT OF THE SENTENCE OF DEATH FOR THE CRIME OF MURDER VIOLATES THE EIGHTH OR FOURTEENTH AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES.

This Court granted certiorari to petitioner Jessie Thurman Fowler in the case of *Fowler v. North Carolina*, No. 73-7031 (Oct. Term, 1974). That case concerns the constitutionality of the death penalty for the defendant convicted of murder in the first degree. Extensive briefs were submitted in that case and oral arguments were made before this Court on April 21, 1975. Additional argument has been called for during the fall term of Court. Hence, petitioner's question has, in essence, been accepted for hearing by the Court. Therefore, any decision in this case should be dependent upon the outcome of the *Fowler* case, and the petition to grant certiorari should be denied.

CONCLUSION

It is therefore respectfully submitted that the question concerning the constitutionality of the death penalty as applied under the Law of North Carolina is already before this Court; and that the Petition for Writ of Certiorari to the Supreme Court of North Carolina should be denied until a final determination by this Court of the *Fowler* case.

Respectfully submitted,

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CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that I am admitted to practice law before the Supreme Court of the United States; and that I have served three copies of the foregoing Response of the State of North Carolina in Opposition to Petition For Writ of Certiorari to the Supreme Court of the United States by depositing of the same to the Counselors for the Petitioner addressed as follows:

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This the 8 day of October, 1975.

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IN THE

SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES

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Petitioners,

v.

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA,
Respondent

ON WRIT OF CERTIORARI TO THE SUPREME COURT
OF NORTH CAROLINA

BRIEF FOR PETITIONERS

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STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA,
Respondent

ON WRIT OF CERTIORARI TO THE SUPREME COURT OF NORTH CAROLINA

BRIEF FOR PETITIONERS

OPINION BELOW

The opinion of the Supreme Court of North Carolina affirming petitioner's convictions of first degree murder and sentences of death by lethal gas is reported at 287 N. C. 578, 215 S. E. 2d 607 (1975). The judgments of the Superior Court of Harnett County finding petitioners guilty and sentencing them to die are unreported.[1] They appear at R. 148, 153.

[1] As of the time of the filing of this brief, the record below has not been printed as an appendix. References to the 165-page record will hereinafter be prefaced by "R".

JURISDICTION

The jurisdiction of this Court rests upon 28 U. S. C. § 1257 (3) (1970), the petitioners having asserted below and asserting here a deprivation of rights secured by the Constitution of the United States.

The judgment of the Supreme Court of North Carolina was entered on June 28, 1975. The petition for certiorari was filed on September 24, 1975, and was granted on January 22, 1976.

CONSTITUTIONAL AND STATUTORY PROVISIONS INVOLVED

This case involves the Eighth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, which provides:

> "Excessive bail shall not be required nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted."

It also involves the Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment.

It further involves N. C. Gen. Stat. §§ 14–17, 14–32, 14–87 (repl. vol. 1969), and N. C. Gen. Stat. §§ 15–176.3, 15–176.4, 15–176.5, 15–187, 15–188 (repl. vol. 1975):

> § 14–17 (1974 cum. Supp.): *"Murder in the first and second degree defined; punishment.*—A murder which shall be perpetrated by means of poison, lying in wait, imprisonment, starving, torture, or by any other kind of willful, deliberate and premeditated killing, or which shall be committed in the perpetration or attempt to perpetrate any arson, rape, robbery, kidnapping, burglary or other felony shall be deemed to be murder in the first degree and shall be punished with death. All other kinds of murder shall be deemed murder in the second degree, and shall be punished by imprisonment of not less than two years nor more than life imprisonment in the State's prison."

> § 14–32 (1974 cum. Supp.): *"Felonious assault with deadly weapon with intent to kill or inflicting serious injury;; punishments.*—
>
> "(a) Any person who assaults another person with a deadly weapon with intent to kill and inflicts serious injury is guilty of a felony punishable by a fine, imprisonment for not more than 20 years, or both such fine and imprisonment.
>
> "(b) Any person who assaults another person with a deadly weapon and inflicts serious injury is guilty of a felony punishable by a fine, imprisonment for not more than 10 years, or both such fine and imprisonment.
>
> "(c) Any person who assaults another person with a deadly weapon with intent to kill is guilty of a felony punishable by a fine, imprisonment for not more than 10 years, or both such fine and imprisonment."
>
> § 14–87: *"Robbery with firearms or other dangerous weapons.*—Any person or persons who, having in possession or with the use or threatened use of any firearms or other dangerous weapon, implement or means, whereby the life of a person is endangered or threatened, unlawfully takes or attempts to take personal property from another or from any place of business, residence or banking institution or any other place where there is a person or persons in attendance, at any time either day or night, or who aids or abets any such person or persons in the commission of such crime shall be guilty of a felony and upon conviction thereof shall be punished by imprisonment for not less than five nor more than thirty years."
>
> § 15–176.3: *"Informing and questioning potential jurors on consequences of guilty verdict.*—When a jury is being selected for a case in which the de-

fendant is indicted for a crime for which the penalty is a sentence of death, the court, the defense, or the State may inform any person called to serve as a potential juror that the death penalty will be imposed upon the return of a verdict of guilty of that crime and may inquire of any person called to serve as a potential juror whether that person understands the consequences of a verdict of guilty of that crime."

§ 15–176.4: *"Instructions to jury on consequences of guilty verdict.*—When a defendant is indicted for a crime for which the penalty is a sentence of death the court upon request by either party, shall instruct the jury that the death penalty will be imposed upon the return of a verdict of guilty of that crime."

§ 15–176.5: *"Argument to jury on consequences of guilty verdict.*—When a case will be submitted to a jury on a charge for which the penalty is a sentence of death, either party in its argument to the jury may indicate the consequences of a verdict of guilty of that charge."

§ 15–187: *"Death by administration of lethal gas.*—Death by electrocution under sentence of law is hereby abolished and death by the administration of lethal gas substituted therefor."

§ 15–188: *"Manner and place of execution.*—The mode of executing a death sentence must in every case be by causing the convict or felon to inhale lethal gas of sufficient quantity to cause death, and the administration of such lethal gas must be continued until such convict or felon is dead; and when any person, convict or felon shall be sentenced by any court of the State having competent jurisdiction to be so executed, such punishment shall only be inflicted within a permanent death chamber which the superintendent of the State penitentiary is hereby authorized and directed to provide within the

walls of the North Carolina penitentiary at Raleigh, North Carolina. The superintendent of the State penitentiary shall also cause to be provided, in conformity with this article and approved by the Governor and Council of State, the necessary appliances for the infliction of the punishment of death in accordance with the requirements of this article."

QUESTION PRESENTED

Whether the imposition and carrying out of the sentence of death for the crime of murder under the law of North Carolina violates the Eighth or Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States?

STATEMENT OF THE CASE

Following a jury trial in the Superior Court of Harnett County, North Carolina, petitioners James Tyrone Woodson and Luby Waxton were sentenced to death for the first degree murder of Mrs. Shirley Whittington Butler.[2] Mrs. Butler was killed on June 3, 1974; selection of petitioners' jury began[3] on December 3, 1974;[4] petitioners were convicted and sentenced on December 9, 1974.

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[2] At this trial, petitioners were also convicted of the armed robbery of Mrs. Butler, but judgment on the armed robbery verdicts was arrested because the same armed robbery was the predicate felony of the first degree murder convictions under the State's felony-murder theory. (R. 149, 155–156.) Petitioner Waxton was simultaneously convicted of assault with a deadly weapon with intent to kill Mr. R. N. Stancil during the robbery. He was sentenced to a term of 20 years imprisonment upon the latter conviction. (R. 153–154.)

[3] Over the objection of defense counsel, a number of veniremen were excluded for cause on account of conscientious scruples against the death penalty. (R. 32–35.) The *voir dire* examination of these veniremen was not transcribed and was not a part of the record transmitted to the Supreme Court of North Carolina.

[4] Petitioners' pretrial motions to dismiss and quash the indictments on the ground that North Carolina's death penalty for murder violated the Eighth and Fourteenth Amendments to the

The State's case against petitioners consisted primarily of the testimony of two codefendants, Leonard Maurice Tucker [hereafter designated Tucker] and Johnnie Lee Carroll [5] [hereafter designated Carroll].[6]

Constitution of the United States had been denied (see pp. 18–19, *infra*), and petitioner Waxton had apparently been found mentally competent to stand trial following proceedings which the record leaves unclear. On July 30, 1974, the trial court had ordered a psychiatric examination for Waxton (R. 8–9); the results of this examination do not appear in the record; but on November 4, 1974, the court again ordered petitioner Waxton examined (R. 20–24), observing that defense counsel had indicated the presence of "a nervous condition which made it difficult for him to communicate with the" petitioner. (R. 21.)

"The Court from its own observation notices a difference in the apparent nervous condition and the ability to communicate of the [petitioner] . . . from his appearance in court on last Tuesday and is of the opinion that further determination should be made of the [petitioner's] . . . physical and mental condition to communicate with his counsel and to participate in his defense."

(*Ibid.*; *see also* R. 23.) No subsequent proceedings on the subject appear in the record.

[5] Another person named Carroll appears from time to time in the record: *George Willie* Carroll, a brother (or half-brother) of petitioner Luby Waxton and of co-defendant Johnnie Lee Carroll. George Willie Carroll testified for the prosecution that he had lent his car to his brothers on the evening of the robbery that resulted in Mrs. Butler's death (R. 53); his car was used by them in the robbery (see, *e. g.*, R. 45)); but George Willie Carroll was not criminally implicated. Since the relevant facts of the case can be described without reference to him, we shall not mention him by name hereafter, and shall use "Carroll" to refer exclusively to Johnnie Lee Carroll.

[6] Although the State introduced the testimony of twelve other witnesses and various exhibits, none of this evidence linked the two petitioners to the crime except indirectly through the testimony of Tucker and Carroll. The State's only nonaccomplice eyewitness, Mr. R. N. Stancil, did not place petitioners on the scene. He testified that he lived across the street from the E–Z Shop, which was operated by Mrs. Butler. (R. 52.) He entered the shop about 10:15 p. m. on June 3, 1974, to buy a soft drink and noticed that Mrs. Butler "was not in her place." (*Ibid.*) Mr. Stancil "met someone coming out who seemed to be in a hurry and went by me. I saw something on the floor and I was going to pick it up when I heard an explosion. The person I had just met said something like 'look out' . . . . After the explosion I felt pain in my back . . . and saw blood coming off my arm . . . .

"I can't identify the person I saw coming out of the E–Z Shop and I did not see Mrs. Butler." (*Ibid.*)

Of the remaining 11 State's witnesses, three were police officers who examined the scene at the E–Z store following th robbery and murder, and who gathered certain physical evidence (R. 36–38) [one of these officers also described Tucker's postarrest confession for the purpose of corroborating Tucker's trial testimony (R. 37)]; two testified as to the chain of custody of physical evidence (R. 52–53); one was a fingerprint expert who testified that Tucker's prints were on a package of Kool cigarettes found in the E–Z Shop (R. 51); one was a pathologist who testified that Mrs. Butler had been killed by a gunshot wound in the head, that there was powder and unburned material around the wound, and that State's Exhibit No. 6 consisted of bullet fragments retrieved from the wound (R. 44); one was a firearms expert who testified concerning the essentially inconclusive ballistics tests that he performed on State's Exhibit No. 6 and on the bullet recovered from Mr. Stancil's arm (R. 56–57); one was a police officer who described Carroll's postarrest confession for the purpose of corroborating Carroll's trial testimony, and who also identified State's Exhibit No. 9, a money tray taken from the E–Z Shop (R. 54–56) that Carroll had buried and to which he led the police after his arrest (R. 46, 55); and two testified concerning the loan of the robbery car by Carroll's brother, n. 5, *supra* (R. 53, 54).

[7] The pleas were accepted and entered on December 2, 1974, the sentences imposed on December 9, 1974. Tucker was sentenced to 10 years imprisonment on his plea of guilty to a charge of accessory after the fact to murder, *State* v. *Leonard Maurice Tucker*, Harnett County Super. Ct. No. 74–CR–5050 (December 9, 1974), and to not less than 20 nor more than 30 years imprisonment on his plea of guilty to a charge of armed robbery, *State* v. *Leonard Maurice Tucker*, Harnett County Super. Ct. No. 74–CR–5051 (December 9, 1974), the sentences to run concurrently. Carroll was

Tucker and Carroll had been indicted for first degree murder and armed robbery with petitioners, but had pleaded guilty to lesser offenses prior to petitioners' trial and were sentenced to terms of imprisonment.[7]

Tucker's and Carroll's accounts were essentially similar. Tucker testified that he and petitioner Woodson were together between 11:00 a. m. and 5:00 p. m. on June 3, 1974, drinking wine. (R. 39.) Woodson declared that "he did not want any part of the robbery" (R. 44; see also R. 43), that they had been discussing with Carroll and petitioner Waxton for the past few days.[8]

Waxton came to Tucker's trailer about 9:30 p. m. and asked where Woodson was. Tucker said Woodson was "uptown," and Waxton told Tucker to come with him. (R. 39, 43.) Waxton preceded Tucker to Woodson's trailer, a block away, where Tucker saw that Waxton "had Woodson backed up against Woodson's trailer." (R. 43.) Waxton hit Woodson in the face and told him that he was going to go along with them. (R. 39.) According to Tucker, Waxton told Woodson that "if he didn't come—if he didn't kill him I [Tucker] would." (*Ibid.*) Woodson's eye was "bleeding a little bit and was swollen," and he put his hand over it and accompanied the other two men. (R. 43.)

The three proceeded to Waxton's trailer where they met Carroll (R. 39, 45), who had borrowed his brother's car for the evening (R. 45). Woodson told Carroll that Waxton hit him because he, Woodson, was drunk;[9]

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sentenced to 10 years imprisonment on his plea of guilty to a charge of accessory after the fact to armed robbery, *State* v. *Johnnie Lee Carroll*, Harnett County Super. Ct. No. 74–CR–4994 (December 9, 1974), and to 10 years imprisonment on his plea of guilty to a charge of accessory after the fact to murder, *State* v. *Johnnie Lee Carroll*, Harnett County Super. Ct. No 74–CR–4995 (December 9, 1974), the sentences to run consecutively.

[8] Tucker testified that "[a]bout a week before the 3rd of June Luby [Waxton] told Tyrone [Woodson] and me he wanted to rob something. That is the only time I heard Luby make statements concerning robbing the place." (R. 41.)

[9] Carroll testified that "I could tell that Woodson had been drinking." (R. 50.)

Carroll got him a towel to put over his eye. (R. 39, 43, 45.) Inside the trailer, Waxton took a nickel-plated derringer from a cabinet[10] and put it in his pocket. (R. 39.) Tucker took a .22 caliber automatic rifle from the couch and handed it to Woodson. (R. 39, 43.) According to Tucker, Woodson had not asked for the rifle: "Luby was giving all the orders." (R. 43; see also R. 49.) According to Carroll, "[w]hen Woodson took the gun from Tucker, he said he was going to show him that he wasn't drunk." (R. 47.)

The four men got into Carroll's brother's car; Carroll drove, Woodson sat beside him on the front seat; Waxton and Tucker sat in the back seat. (R. 39.) Waxton declared that they were going to rob the E–Z Shop, but when they arrived they found customers there and drove on past the store. (R. 39.) They stopped the car briefly and, at Waxton's direction, Woodson test-fired the rifle by shooting it into the ground twice. (R. 39–40, 43, 45, 47.)[11]

They then returned and parked near the store. "Up until the last minute Waxton had instructed Woodson to go in but [he] changed his mind" (R. 44), and so Tucker accompanied Waxton into the store while Carroll and Woodson remained in the car with the rifle in the front seat.[12] (R. 40.) "Waxton told Woodson not to let anybody in the store," and Woodson said nothing in

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[10] Although Carroll had previously seen Waxton with a "silver Derringer," he did not see any pistol in Waxton's possession on the night of the crime. (R. 46.)

[11] Petitioner Woodson testified, on cross-examination, that "[w]hen we got there [to the E–Z Shop] we drove on by because too many people were in the store. I didn't test-fire the rifle and I don't remember anybody getting out of the car." (R. 104.) See pp. 13–14, n. 16, 17, *infra*.

[12] According to Tucker, "the rifle was on the floor of the front seat and not in Woodson's hands." (R. 43.) See also R. 40. Carroll testified that Woodson had earlier held the rifle "in his hand" when the four first left the Waxton trailer in the car. (R. 45.) See also p. 10, n. 14, *infra*.

response. (R. 43.) Inside the store, Tucker asked Mrs. Butler for a package of Kool cigarettes. She gave them to him and he paid her. (R. 40.) He moved down the counter, and Waxton also asked for a package of Kools. "[T]he woman handed them to him and Luby then reached into his pocket, pulled out the Derringer, stuck it around or about the left side of her neck and fired one shot." (*Ibid.*) Waxton then leapt over the counter and lifted the money tray from the cash register. (*Ibid.*) He put it on the counter, where Tucker picked it up and took it out of the store. (R. 40.)[13] As Tucker walked out the door, he passed R. N. Stancil (R. 40), who was entering the store to make a purchase (R. 52). Tucker "told him to look out and [I] kept walking toward the car. Then I heard a second shot from inside the store. I got in the car and about a couple of minutes after the second shot Luby came out of the store walking fast with some paper money in his hand." (R. 40; see also R. 45.)[14] The men drove to Waxton's mother's house (where Carroll, Waxton's half-brother lived (R. 45, 46)), and, on the way, Waxton said that "he shot the man in the back" in the store (R. 40).

At the house, Tucker and Waxton counted the money in the bathroom: "[t]here was about $280 and Luby kept it." (*Ibid.*) Carroll put the rifle and the money tray in the pantry (R. 45, 46), and, a few hours later, removed the money tray at Waxton's direction (R. 46, 48) and buried it under the house (*ibid.*). On June 4, Waxton and Woodson flew to Newark, New Jersey, where they were subsequently apprehended. (R. 102–103.)

On cross-examination, Tucker admitted that he had

[13] Carroll saw Tucker emerge from the store carrying the money tray. (R. 45.)

[14] Carroll testified that "Woodson saw Stancil first. He did not stop him. Woodson got out of the car with the rifle and I pulled him back into the car and told him to put the rifle down." (R. 48.)

pleaded guilty to lesser charges "in an attempt to save myself." (R. 42.) "I was told that I would have to testify against Luby Waxton and I agreed to do that in return for the State Attorney to accept a lesser plea." (*Ibid*). Tucker stated that he "was afraid of Waxton" (R. 43), but added that "Waxton didn't threaten any of us" (R. 44) to force them to participate in the robbery. Likewise, Carroll testified that "[i]t is true that I have made a trade to save my own life . . . I agreed to come up here and testify in order to save my own neck." (R. 47.) He added that Woodson "and Tucker went willingly and did whatever they did willingly" (*ibid.*), and that he himself "participated in the crimes on my own; Luby did not make me." (R. 48.)

At the close of the State's evidence, a hearing was held in the absence of the jury[15] at which petitioner

[15] Just before this *in camera* hearing was held, the following exchange occurred. The trial court had denied petitioners' motions for a mistrial based on certain discrepancies between the trial testimony of prosecution witnesses and a summary previously furnished to defense counsel; counsel for the petitioner Woodson renewed the motion; and the solicitor responded (the solicitor is also called the "district attorney" (R. 4, 6, 12, 17, 26; *but see* R. 1, 5, 7)):

"MR. TWISDALE [solicitor]: . . . Your Honor, I would like to state for the record that Mr. McCormick and I have had several pleading negotiations sessions. I met him at least twice in his office and at least one time up here and I have just as much idea of his client entering pleas Monday morning as I did Max McLeon [Tucker's attorney] or Sammy Stephenson [Carroll's attorney] and I say pleas of guilty.

"MR. McCORMICK [counsel for petitioner Woodson]: I'm sorry I didn't catch that. Are you saying that we indicated that we were going to plead guilty?

"MR. TWISDALE: Yes, sir.

"MR. McCORMICK: I'd like to say that I have never stated that to Mr. Twisdale, I have told him that I would make certain recommendations to my client and I have consistently told him that Woodson says he was not guilty.

"MR. TWISDALE: I am saying, your Honor as a result of our discussion I was under as much impression that pleas of not guilty

Waxton tendered a guilty plea to charges of armed robbery and accessory after the fact to murder. Petitioner Waxton's counsel stated:

> "He [Waxton] . . . stated to me that he desired to plead guilty to the same thing Mr. Tucker had pled guilty to and stated that he had—that he was not any more guilty of anything than was the defendant Mr. Tucker, and that he did not feel that it was fair or right for Tucker to be given an opportunity to plead guilty without his having been afforded the same opportunity. . . .
> "[I]t does appear to me that there would be a basic injustice and inequality in the light of the evidence which has been heretofore presented, and accepting for the moment without admitting that testimony of the defendant Tucker is true in all respects, in the light that it does not appear to me that the defendant Waxton could not legally be guilty of any offense greater than any offense for which the defendant Tucker is allegedly guilty, and therefore to accept such pleas as have been accepted from the defendant Tucker . . . [and not to afford] the defendant Waxton the same opportunity and. . . the same type of pleas . . . produces an inequality and unjust results which I believe our law does not contemplate. I would have to say in all honesty and candor, in light of the evidence that we have heard up to this point, it would seem to me to be most unjust and inequitable to the defendant Waxton to be subjected to a punishment greater than that to which defendant Tucker might be subjected under his pleas, if the defendant Waxton, wanted to tender the same kind of guilty pleas which the defendant Tucker tendered, and Mr. Waxton tells me that he does want to tender such plea."

being entered in his case as is Sammy Stephenson or Max McLeod until this morning. [*sic*]

"MR. McCORMICK. I did not offer you one did I.

"MR. TWISDALE: No, sir, but I said I had the same impression.

"COURT: Motions for mistrial are denied and again I'm going to let the record stand for itself on the happening up until now." (R. 70–71.)

(R. 83, 84–85.) Petitioner Waxton was examined by the trial court concerning his comprehension of the tender and his desire to enter pleas of guilty. (R. 86.) The solicitor, however, declared simply, "I cannot accept the pleas" (R. 87); and the trial continued.

Petitioner Waxton testified in his defense, giving an account of the robbery that was basically similar to the accounts given by Tucker and Carroll. He said, however, that he had punched Woodson in the eye because Woodson owed him $3.00 and had declared, "I don't have anything," when Waxton came for the money. (R. 88–89.) He also testified that he had never owned a handgun; that he did not have a pistol that night; that Tucker carried a pistol in his pocket; and that Tucker shot Mrs. Butler and Mr. Stancil. (R. 89, 90.) [16]

> "Planning of the robbery began in the trailer park. All of us were giving suggestions of what to do. Tyrone gave suggestions. On June 3 we all of a sudden came together to rob the store. We all had been talking about it. I am referring to James Tyrone Woodson, Johnnie Lee Carroll, Leonard Maurice Tucker and myself. We had talked earlier about robbing another E–Z Shop on Cumberland Street but then decided not to rob it after someone

[16] Waxton's testimony on direct examination appears to imply that it was Woodson's idea to test-fire the rifle before the robbery. (R. 89.) On cross-examination, he stated that "Tucker suggested that Woodson test-fire the rifle" (R. 92), but he subsequently testified that he was not sure which of the other men had made the suggestion (R. 97).

made the remark there were too many customers coming in and out of that one." [17]

(R. 94–95.) On the evening of June 3, 1974, "[w]hen Tucker got to my trailer, he said, 'Are you ready to go?' and I said, 'Yes, I'm ready.' We all four agreed we were ready." (R. 89.) Petitioner Waxton denied forcing anyone to participate in the robbery (R. 92–93; see also R. 89), and he declared that the four of them divided the proceeds of the robbery equally (R. 93).

Petitioner Woodson also took the stand and gave his account of the robbery. He "became addicted to hard drugs," in Newark, New Jersey, broke the habit, and then went to North Carolina with Waxton to try to escape its recurrence. (R. 98–99.)

> "Waxton had mentioned the robbery to me on the morning before the robbery. I never agreed to go along. When he brought the subject up I would not say anything. I thought it was crazy from the beginning.
>
> "Most of that day (June 3) Tucker and I stayed together. We made two trips to the store to buy wine. We drank. We discussed the proposed robbery by Luby. Tucker said Waxton had mentioned it to him too. I told Tucker I wasn't going to be in no robbery and he said the same thing."

(R. 99.) Later that evening, Waxton came to Woodson's trailer:

> "[h]e said, 'Look at you, you are drunk.' Well he cursed, he said, 'M.... F...., look at you, you are drunk,' and I said, 'So what,' and he said, 'So what, you are drunk.' Just like that. And I said, 'So

[17] Waxton testified that, "[a]ll four of us talked about it [the robbery] and planned it in advance because Johnnie Lee [Carroll] and Tyrone [Woodson] were unemployed. They said they wanted money so they were going to pull a job. I said, 'Why not?'" (R. 91; see also R. 94.)

> what, I am not going nowhere, and that is when he hit me. I grabbed my eye and I fell up against the trailer and then I went down. I never hit him. He did not hit me again. He said 'If I don't kill you M..... F....., Tucker will.' 'Come on and let's go.'"

(R. 100.) Woodson took the rifle from Tucker and entered the car: "[n]o one forced me in the car. I didn't want to go but, just put it this way, I was scared, after being punched in the face and threatened in a kind of way." (*Ibid.*)[18] He did not recall any test-firing of the rifle. (*Ibid.*) While sitting in the car with Carroll outside the store, he "was laying back with the towel over my eye." (R. 100.) He heard one shot. Then Tucker came running out. (R. 101.) Woodson saw Mr. Stancil enter the store but made no effort to stop him. He heard another shot, and Waxton rushed out with paper money in his hand. (*Ibid.*) After they returned to Carroll's and Waxton's mother's house, there was no division of the money; he saw Waxton give his mother "something that was sparkling." (*Ibid.*) (He had "previously seen Waxton with a .22 Derringer, nickelplated, pearl handle.") (*Ibid.*) Later that night, when Woodson and Waxton were alone,

> "[w]e turned on the T. V. and I just turned around and started to mention about him shooting the woman but the woman was the last word I got out of my mouth before he had turned around and hit

[18] He later testified on cross-examination: "I got in the car of my own free will, I knew there was going to be a robbery, and I knew we were going to the place. . . . No one was keeping me in the car. . . ." (R. 105.) His principal reason for accompanying the others, first away from his own trailer and then in the car, was that the woman with whom he was living was upset over seeing him struck by Waxton, and was "screaming and hollering"; and, "not knowing what she might have done," he "didn't want her to get hurt over me in any kind of way." (R. 100.)

> me in the other eye, and blood started coming out of my nose so I just got up and staggered to the bathroom and washed my face, you know, and went and laid across the bed; and after he hit me he told me never in my life to mention that woman's name again ever. Said he did not want to hear no more about what happened."

(R. 101–102.) Petitioner Woodson introduced a signed statement he had given to the police on June 16, 1974. (R. 108–114.) Two police officers testified without contradiction that Woodson was the first of the four men to tell the investigating officers about the robbery and to implicate the others. (R. 38, 56; see also R. 51, 126.)

The trial court instructed the jury that it could find petitioners guilty or not guilty of first degree murder (R. 142–143, 145), and guilty or not guilty of armed robbery (R. 143–144, 145–146), and that it could find petitioner Waxton guilty or not guilty of assault with a deadly weapon with intent to kill (R. 144), or guilty of the lesser included offense of assault with a deadly weapon inflicting serious injury (R. 144–145).

Because the State had proceeded on the theory that Petitioner Woodson was an aider and abettor in the robbery,[19] the court instructed the jury that "you cannot find Tyrone Woodson guilty of an offense unless you have also found Luby Waxton guilty of that offense, the same offense" (R. 145; see also R. 123–134, 142–143). The court further charged that the jury might find petitioner

[19] "The State proceeds on the theory in this case that the defendant Waxton committed murder or killed Mrs. Butler while in the perpetration of a robbery of the place of business where she worked and that he is thereby guilty of murder in the first degree, and it contends that the defendant Woodson was an aider and abettor in the robbery being committed and that murder having been committed in the perpetration of a robbery and he being an aider and abettor, then he is guilty of murder in the first degree equally with the defendant Waxton." (R. 120–121.)

Woodson not guilty of any offense if it found that he had committed otherwise criminal acts under coercion and duress.[20] It instructed the jury that first degree murder "is punishable by death." (R. 120.)

The jury found both petitioners guilty of first degree murder and armed robbery (R. 147–148, 149), and it found petitioner Waxton guilty of assault with a deadly weapon with intent to kill. (R. 150.) Petitioners were sentenced to death upon the murder convictions. (R.

[20] "So, recognizing that the State must prove beyond a reasonable doubt that the conduct of Woodson was willfully, that is of his own free will, he did acts which constituted violations of the law with which he is charged, if you believe that he was under a well-founded fear of death or serious bodily harm, immediate, eminent [*sic*] and impending at the hands of Luby Waxton such as to cause him to go when he would not have gone to render assistance or be ready to render assistance when he would not have otherwise done so in the commission of an armed robbery, then under those circumstances Woodson would not be guilty of the armed robbery because he would not have acted of his own free will and willfully; but mere persuasion by another person or a lack of strong will or fear of slight or remote injury is not enough to excuse a criminal act.

"The defendant Woodson contends that he was coerced by reason of all the background and circumstances of his knowledge of Waxton, his authority over him and his power, the assault on him on this day and knowledge of other assaults that he had committed, that he reasonably apprehended eminent [*sic*] danger of death or great bodily harm at Waxton's hands if he did not go along and take whatever part he took, and under those circumstances he contends he was coerced and was not guilty of either robbery or any killing which might have resulted from the robbery.

"The defendant Woodson contends that at most he was merely present. As I read to you earlier in the law, members of the jury, mere presence at the scene of a crime does not constitute aiding and abetting, and a person may be present even though a criminal act is taking place and do nothing to prevent it without being guilty of the offense charged, but if his presence under all the circumstances is a communication to the other person of his readiness and willingness to assist if needed, under those circumstances he may be an aider and abettor." (R. 139–140.)

148–149, 154–155.) On June 26, 1975, the Supreme Court of North Carolina affirmed those convictions and petitioners' death sentences.

HOW THE CONSTITUTIONAL QUESTION WAS PRESENTED AND DECIDED BELOW

Petitioners' pretrial motions to quash and dismiss the indictment charging them with murder on the ground that "GS 14–17 as presently written violates the Eighth and Fourteenth Amendments to the Constitution of the United States" because it authorizes the death penalty for first degree murder (R. 19; see also R. 20, 25), were denied (R. 20, 25). Postjudgment motions by petitioners to arrest judgment, based on this ground (R. 151–153), were also denied (R. 152). These rulings were assigned by petitioners as error on appeal (R. 160–164), and the Supreme Court of North Carolina succinctly rejected petitioners' claims, *State* v. *Woodson and Waxton*, 287 N. C. 578, 215 S. E. 2d 607, 615 (1975).

SUMMARY OF ARGUMENT

I.

North Carolina's 1974 legislation ostensibly makes the death penalty "mandatory" for first degree murder and first degree rape. But the State's procedures in capital cases involve numerous uncontrolled discretionary judgments which function to select certain capital offenders for death and to cull other equally guilty defendants for lesser sentences.[21] The broad scope of felony-murder liability makes it particularly likely that prosecutors' unfettered charging and plea-bargaining discretion will result in the capricious visitation of the death penalty upon a random handful of defendants. Statutory provisions

[21] These procedures are demonstrated in the Brief for Petitioner in *Fowler* v. *North Carolina*, No. 73-7031, at 41–101, and we do not repeat that demonstation in the present brief.

ratifying procedures established by the North Carolina Supreme Court assure that jurors trying capital cases will know the penalty consequences of their guilt verdicts and thereby invite the exercise of sentencing discretion through the forms of guilt and degree-of-guilt determinations. As administered in such a system, the death penalty continues to be inflicted arbitrarily in violation of the command of *Furman* v. *Georgia*, 408 U. S. 238 (1972).

II.[22]

The perpetuation of arbitrariness in post-*Furman* capital punishment schemes is not mere happenstance. The death penalty is too cruelly intolerable for our society to apply it regularly and even-handedly; and it is inherently too purposeless and irrational to be applied selectively on any reasoned, noninvidious basis. None of the justifications advanced to support the cruelty of killing a random smattering of prisoners annually survives examination in the light of the realities of this insensate lottery; and none begins, of course, to justify the killing of any particular human being while his indistinguishable counterparts are spared in numbers that attest to our collective abhorrence of what we are doing to an outcast few.

ARGUMENT

I.

INTRODUCTION

Slightly more than a year after the decision of the Supreme Court of North Carolina in *State* v. *Waddell*, 282 N. C. 431, 194 S. E. 2d 19 (1973),[23] the North Caro-

[22] This point incorporates by reference the submissions made in petitioners' briefs in *Fowler* v. *North Carolina*, No. 73-7031, and *Jurek* v. *Texas*, No. 75-5394.

[23] The court in *Waddell* had considered the effect of this Court's decision in *Furman* v. *Georgia*, 408 U. S. 238 (1972), upon North Carolina's pre-*Furman* capital procedure. At that time, a discretionary death penalty was authorized as the punishment for first

lina Legislature enacted N. C. Sess. Laws 1973, c. 1201, § 1 (2d Sess., 1974),[24] amending N. C. Gen. Stat. § 14–17 to provide:

"A murder which shall be perpetrated by means of poison, lying in wait, imprisonment, starving, torture, or by any other kind of willful, deliberate and premeditated killing, or which shall be committed in the perpetration or attempt to perpetrate any arson, rape, robbery, kidnapping, burglary or other felony, shall be deemed to be murder in the first degree and shall be punished with death. All other kinds of murder shall be deemed murder in the second degree, and shall be punished by imprisonment for a term of not less than two years nor more than life imprisonment in the State's prison." [25]

Following the lead of *Waddell*, this legislation excises the recommendation-of-mercy provision from the former statute fixing death as the punishment for first-degree murder. It makes a few other substantive changes,[26] but

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degree murder, N. C. Gen. Stat. §14–17 (repl. vol. 1969); rape, N. C. Gen. Stat. § 14–21 (repl. vol. 1969); first degree burglary, N. C. Gen. Stat. § 14–52 (repl. vol. 1969); and arson, N. C. Gen. Stat. § 14–58 (repl. vol. 1969). Appellant Waddell had been condemned for rape under N. C. Gen. Stat. § 14–21 (repl. vol. 1969), which provided:

"[e]very person who is convicted of ravishing and carnally knowing any female of the age of twelve years or more by force and against her will, or who is convicted of unlawfully and carnally knowing and abusing any female child under the age of twelve years, shall suffer death: Provided, if the jury shall so recommend at the time of rendering its verdict in open court, the punishment shall be imprisonment for life in the State's prison, and the court shall so instruct the jury."

A majority of the North Carolina Supreme Court held that *Furman* invalidated *only* the mercy proviso ("if the jury shall so recommend at the time of rendering its verdict in open court, the punishment shall be imprisonment for life"); and it ruled that thenceforth the death penalty would be "mandatory" upon a conviction for first degree murder, rape, first degree burglary and arson. *State* v. *Waddell*, *supra*, 194 S. E. 2d, at 28. Capital cases in North Carolina were governed by *Waddell* from January 18, 1973 (the date of the decision), until April 8, 1974, when N. C. Sess. Laws, c. 1201, took effect. The Court has granted certiorari to consider the constitutionality of a death sentence imposed during this period in *Fowler* v. *North Carolina*, No. 73–7031.

[24] Section 2 of c. 1201 enacted a new capital crime, "first degree rape," amending § 14–21:

"Every person who ravishes and carnally knows any female of the age of 12 years or more by force and against her will, or who unlawfully and carnally knows and abuses any female child under the age of 12 years, shall be guilty of rape, and upon conviction, shall be punished as follows:

"(a) First-Degree Rape—

"(1) If the person guilty of rape is more than 16 years of age, and the rape victim is a virtuous female child under the age of 12 years, the punishment shall be death; or

"(2) If the person guilty of rape is more than 16 years of age, and the rape victim had her resistance overcome or her submission procured by the use of a deadly weapon, or by the infliction of serious bodily injury to her, the punishment shall be death.

"(b) Second-Degree Rape—Any other offense of rape defined in this section shall be a lesser-included offense of rape in the first degree and shall be punished by imprisonment in the State's prison for life, or for a term of years, in the discretion of the court."

Other sections of the 1974 legislation repealed the death penalty for first degree burglary (§ 3, c. 1201) and arson (§ 4, c. 1201).

[25] North Carolina General Statutes § 14–17 previously provided:

"A murder which shall be perpetrated by means of poison, lying in wait, imprisonment, starving, torture, or by any other kind of willful, deliberate and premeditated killing, or which shall be committed in the perpetration or attempt to perpetrate any arson, rape, robbery, burglary or other felony, shall be deemed to be murder in the first degree and shall be punished with death: Provided, if at the time of rendering its verdict in open court, the jury shall so recommend, the punishment shall be imprisonment for life in the State's prison, and the court shall so instruct the jury. All other kinds of murder shall be deemed murder in the second degree, and shall be punished with imprisonment of not less than two nor more than thirty years in the State's prison." N. C. Gen. Stat. § 14–17 (repl. vol. 1969).

[26] The new legislation also added the crime of kidnapping as a predicate felony for first degree felony murder, increased the possible sentence for second degree murder from two-to-thirty years to two-

essentially leaves North Carolina's death penalty for first degree murder just as it was under *Waddell*. No alterations were made in North Carolina procedures for the administration of the penalty.

The Court has before it in the Brief for Petitioner in *Fowler* v. *North Carolina*, No. 73–7031 [hereafter cited as Petitioner's *Fowler* Brief] a lengthy analysis of the North Carolina law and procedure as it was before, and remains after, the 1974 statute. That analysis demonstrates how a series of uncontrolled discretionary judgments by prosecutors, trial judges, jurors and governors operates to spare the lives of some "capital" defendants while others in indistinguishable circumstances are arbitrarily condemned to die. We will not burden the Court by repeating that discussion here. We merely note that it is fully applicable and contains the submission which we make on behalf of petitioners James Tyrone Woodson and Luby Waxton, subject to the few additions which follows.

II.

THE ARBITRARY INFLICTION OF DEATH

Two points should be added to Part II of Petitioner's *Fowler* Brief, at 26–101:

A. *"Mandatory" Death and Jury Clemency*

In *State* v. *Britt*, 285 N. C. 256, 204 S. E. 2d 817, 828 (1974), the Supreme Court of North Carolina ruled that defense counsel must be allowed to "inform" the jury of the "consequence" of a first degree murder verdict. During jury selection, both defense counsel and the prosecutor may "examin[e] [all prospective jurors] concerning their attitudes toward capital punishment." *Id.*, at 828.

"'[I]n order "to keep the trial on an even keel"

years-to-life imprisonment, and made a minor verbal alteration in § 14–17. See N. C. Sess. Laws 1973, c. 1201 § 1.

> and to insure complete fairness to all parties . . .' . . . . if the trial judge observes that the jury is confused or uncertain as to whether one of its permissive verdicts would result in a mandatory death sentence, in our opinion, sufficient compelling reason exists to justify his informing the jury of the consequence of their possible verdicts."

(*Ibid.*). Furthermore, while counsel is not allowed to "argue" punishment in his summation to the jury, "[c]ounsel may . . . *in any case*, read or state to the jury a statute or other rule of law relevant to such case, including the statutory provision fixing the punishment for the offense charged." *Id.*, at 829. Failure to inform the jury of the penalty imposed pursuant to a first degree murder conviction is reversible error under the *Britt* decision. See *State* v. *Anthony Carey*, 285 N. C. 497, 206 S. E. 2d 213 (1974); *State* v. *Albert Carey*, 285 N. C. 509, 206 S. E. 2d 222 (1974); *State* v. *Bell*, 287 N. C. 248, 214 S. E. 2d 53 (1974).

The North Carolina Legislature has now codified the *Britt* rules, providing that defense counsel may inform veniremen on *voir dire* that a death penalty will be imposed upon the return of a verdict of guilty to a capital crime (N. C. Gen. Stat. § 15–176.3 (repl. vol. 1975)); that he may request the trial judge to instruct the jury that the death penalty will be imposed upon the return of a verdict of guilty to a capital crime (N. C. Gen. Stat. § 15–176.4 (repl. vol. 1975)); and that he may in closing argument in a capital case "indicate the consequences of a verdict of guilty." (N. C. Gen. Stat. § 15–176.5 (repl. vol. 1975)).

Manifestly, the purpose and effect of insuring that the jury knows the fatal consequences of a first degree murder conviction are to invite jurors to avoid those consequences in a "deserving" or sympathetic case. The extent of a North Carolina jury's power to respond to the invitation is documented in Petitioner's *Fowler* Brief,

at 62–95; and the well-known historical fact of jury nullification of "mandatory" death penalty laws in and outside of North Carolina is noted in *id.*, at 67–68, 81, 90–92, n. 133. Theoretically, of course, a North Carolina jury now has no sentencing role; and since its clear duty under North Carolina's "mandatory" punishment legislation is to find the facts without regard to the consequences of its verdict,[27] the sentencing information given it by *Britt* and *Britt*'s statutory codification is theoretically irrelevant. But North Carolina has not been able to follow the theory that far in the face of the realities. Both its judicial and its legislative branches have assiduously protected a "legal syste[m] that permit[s] this unique penalty to be . . . wantonly and . . . freakishly imposed" [28] through the exercise of *ad hoc* capital sentencing discretion by juries.

B. *"Mandatory" Death and Felony Murder*

Petitioners' jury was instructed on first degree felony murder whereas Jesse Thurman Fowler's jury was instructed on first degree premeditated and deliberated murder.[29] This difference is of no constitutional significance, as we shall see.

Under N. C. Gen. Stat. § 14–17, "a homicide is murder in the first degree if it results from the commission or attempted commission of one of the four specified felonies or of any other felony inherently dangerous to life, without regard to whether the death be intended or not." *State* v. *Streeton*, 231 N. C. 301, 56 S. E. 2d 649, 652

[27] See, *e. g.*, *State* v. *Little*, 228 N. C. 417, 45 S. E. 2d 542, 545 (1947); *State* v. *Hawley*, 229 N. C. 167, 48 S. E. 2d 35, 36–37 (1948); *State* v. *Davis*, 238 N. C. 252, 87 S. E. 2d 630, 631 (1953).

[28] *Furman* v. *Georgia*, *supra*, 408 U. S., at 310 (concurring opinion of MR. JUSTICE STEWART).

[29] The distinction between these two kinds of first degree murder is more apparent than real for, as we shall see, a jury is often instructed on both theories.

(1949).[30] As in most States, if a homicide is committed in the perpetration of a felony, "the State is not put to the proof of premeditation and deliberation inasmuch as the law presumes premeditation and deliberation." *State* v. *Bunton*, 247 N. C. 510, 101 S. E. 2d 454, 457 (1958). See also *State* v. *Fox*, 277 N. C. 1, 175 S. E. 2d 561, 571 (1970); *State* v. *Maynard*, 247 N. C. 462, 101 S. E. 2d 340, 345 (1958); *State* v. *King*, 226 N. C. 241, 37 S. E. 2d 684, 686 (1946). Even an accidental killing is first degree murder if committed during the commission of a felony, *State* v. *Thompson*, 280 N. C. 202, 185 S. E. 2d 666, 673–674 (1972); *State* v. *Phillips*, 264 N. C. 508, 142 S. E. 2d 337, 339 (1965) (dictum), and the State need establish no *mens rea* other than that required for the predicate felony itself:

> "'[i]t is not necessary . . . to show that the killing was intended or even that the act resulting in death was intended. It may have been quite unexpected.' [citing Perkins Criminal Law 35 (1957)] . . . . 'The turpitude of the felonious act is deemed to supply the element of deliberations or design to effect death.' 40 Am. Jur. 2d Homicide § 46, at 336."

State v. *Thompson*, *supra*, 185 S. E. 2d, at 673–674.

Moreover, felony-murder liability extends to all those who took part in the commission of the felony, whether by conspiring to commit the crime, being present at the scene of the crime with an intention and a capacity to assist if necessary, wielding the fatal weapon, or facilitating an escape from the scene of the crime:

> "defendant argues that since he did not actively participate in the armed robbery attempt he is not criminally responsible for the murder committed in that attempt.
>
> . . . . .

[30] See p. 21, n. 26, *supra*.

"'Those who enter into a conspiracy to violate the criminal laws thereby forfeit their independence, and jeopardize their liberty, for, by agreeing with another or others to engage in an unlawful enterprise, they thereby place their safety and freedom in the hands of each and every member of the conspiracy.' . . .

"'The felony-murder rule applies whenever a conspirator kills another person in the course of committing a felony, as against the contention that the killing was not part of the conspiracy. If the unlawful act agreed to be done is dangerous or homicidal in its character, or if its accomplishment will necessarily or probably require the use of force and violence, which may result in the taking of life unlawfully, *every party* to such agreement will be held criminally liable for whatever any of his co-conspirators may do in furtherance of the common design.'"

State v. *Carey*, 285 N. C. 497, 206 S. E. 2d 213, 218 (1974) (emphasis in original). See also *State* v. *Kelly*, 243 N. C. 177, 90 S. E. 2d 241, 244 (1955); *State* v. *Smith*, 221 N. C. 400, 20 S. E. 2d 360, 363–364 (1942); *State* v. *Williams*, 216 N. C. 446, 5 S. E. 2d 314, 315 (1939). "[W]hen a conspiracy is formed to commit a robbery or burglary, and a murder is committed by any one of the conspirators in the attempted perpetration of the crime, each and all of the conspirators are guilty of murder in the first degree." *State* v. *Fox*, *supra*, 175 S. E. 2d, at 571.

The broad scope of potential capital liability thus created has frequently been criticized by courts[31] and

[31] In *People* v. *Phillips*, 64 Cal. 2d 574, 51 Cal. Rptr. 225, 414 P. 2d 353 (1966), the California Supreme Court termed the doctrine a "highly artificial concept that deserves no extension beyond its required application." 414 P. 2d, at 360. The court noted:

"The felony murder doctrine has been censured not only because it artificially imposes malice as to one crime because of defendant's commission of another but because it anachronistically resurrects from a bygone age a 'barbaric' concept that has been discarded in the place of its origin. 'Some writers describe the concept as barbaric and urge its abolition or strict limitation.'" 414 P. 2d, at 360 n. 6.

Cf. Commonwealth ex rel. Smith v. *Myers*, 438 Pa. 218, 261 A. 2d 550, 554 (1970):

"the rule has evoked bitter comment referring to it as 'a hold-over from the days of our barbarian Anglo-Saxon ancestors of pre-Norman days, [having] very little right to existence in modern society.'"

The Kentucky Supreme Court explained the derivation of the doctrine:

"If the crime intended was a felony, as at common law practically all felonies were punishable with death, either with or without benefit of clergy, the felonious intent of the intended crime was imputed to the committed act, and, if it were homicide, made it murder; for it was considered immaterial whether a man was hanged for one felony or another."

Powers v. *Commonwealth*, 110 Ky. 386, 413, 61 S. W. 735, 742 (1901). See also *People* v. *Enoch*, 13 Wend. 159, 174 (N. Y. 1834). For a description of the history here referred to, see 4 Blackstone, Commentaries on the Laws of England *200–201 (1st ed. 1769)); 3 Stephen, A History of the Criminal Law of England 21–38 (1883); Moesel, A Survey of Felony Murder, 28 Temple L. Q. 453 (1955); Crum, Causal Relations in the Felony Murder Rule, 1952 Wash. U. L. Q. 191.

"The common law felony-murder rule . . . has been subjected to some harsh criticism, most of it thoroughly warranted. It has been said to be 'highly punitive and objectionable as imposing the consequences of murder upon a death wholly unintended.'"

Commonwealth ex rel. Smith v. *Myers*, *supra*, 271 A. 2d, at 553. See also *Commonwealth* v. *Redline*, 391 Pa. 486, 137 A. 2d 472 (1958).

"The felony-murder rule has been criticized on the grounds that in almost all cases in which it is applied it is unnecessary and that it erodes the relation between criminal liability and moral culpability."

People v. *Washington*, 62 Cal. 2d 777, 44 Cal. Rptr. 442, 402 P. 2d 130, 134 (1965). *Cf. Commonwealth ex rel. Smith* v. *Myers*, 438 Pa. 218, 261 A. 2d 550, 554 (1970).

commentators who have analyzed the ambiguous origins and contradictory rationale of the doctrine[32] and the unpredictable criminal liability it often imposes. It is

[32] See, *e. g.*, Note, Felony Murder as a First Degree Offense: An Anachronism Retained, 66 Yale L. J. 427 (1957); Stephens, A His-

within this context that a number of critical decisions must be made at different points in the criminal justice system to determine which putative capital defendants will live and which will die.

1. *Prosecutorial Charging Discretion*

The Wickersham Commission's observation that "[t]he Prosecutor [is] the real arbiter of what laws shall be enforced and against whom" [33] is dramatically exemplified in felony murder cases. For the prosecutor's power to negotiate guilty pleas (p. 32, *infra*) is not the

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tory of the Criminal Law of England 57, 74–76 (1883); Moreland, A Re-examination of the Law of Homicide, 59 Ky. L. J. 788, 803 (1971); Packer, Criminal Code Revision, 23 U. Toronto L. J. 1, 3–4 (1973); Holmes, The Common Law 57–58 (1881); Morris, The Felon's Responsibility for the Lethal Acts of Others, 105 U. Pa. L. Rev. 50, 59 (1956); Perkins, Malice Aforethought, 43 Yale L. J. 537, 558–560 (1934). *Cf.* Stroud, Mens REA 170–171, 173 (1914):

"The principle of constructive homicide . . . may be shortly stated to be that the *mens rea* necessary to support a conviction of murder . . . need not consist of any form of homicidal intentionality but may be a culpable intent to commit some other crime, which other crime need not even be an offense against the person, provided that . . . to support a conviction of constructive murder, the *mens rea* must have been felonious.

. . . . . .

"It is curious that such a harsh anomaly as the doctrine of constructive crime should be confined to that particular case where its application is calculated to work the greatest possible hardship, involving, upon a charge of murder, the infliction of the capital sentence for a mere attempt to commit a felony less than homicide."

And see LaFave & Scott, Criminal Law 560 (1972);

"The rationale of the doctrine is that one who commits a felony is a bad person with a bad state of mind, and he has caused a bad result so that we should not worry too much about the fact that the fatal result he accomplished was quite different and a good deal worse than the bad result he intended. Yet it is a general principle of criminal law that one is not ordinarily criminally liable for bad results which differ greatly from intended results."

[33] National Commission on Law Observance and Enforcement, Report on Prosecution 19 (1931).

only arbitrarily selective process at work in the winnowing of felony-murder defendants for the few thought fit to die. The prosecutor may also proceed to trial on a second degree murder charge, even though the State contends that the homicide was committed during the course of a felony.

In *State* v. *Blackwelder*, 182 N. C. 899, 109 S. E. 644 (1921), for example, where the appellant had been convicted of second degree murder "the state contended [at trial] that Blackwelder and McDaniel, in the presence of the deceased, had broken and entered into his garage with intent to steal his car, and were therefore guilty of a felony." 109 S. E., at 646.[34] However, "[w]hen the case was called for trial, the solicitor announced that he would not request a verdict for murder in the first degree, but only for murder in the second degree, or for manslaughter." [35] Although there was no way for the solicitor to rationalize his decision to prosecute a felony-murder case as second degree murder, the Supreme Court of North Carolina affirmed the conviction, remarking that "[t]here was evidence tending to support each of the theories referred to." 109 S. E., at 647.[36] The point

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[34] "The state contended that Blackwelder, McDaniel, and Jones had gone in a car from Concord to the residence of the deceased for the purpose of committing larceny of the car which the deceased had locked in his garage; that Jones drove the car and that Blackwelder and McDaniel got out of the car when it stopped in front of the garage, broke the door, and were in the act of taking the car away when they were frightened by the deceased."

State v. *Blackwelder*, *supra*, 109 S. E., at 645.

[35] 109 S. E., at 644. See Petitioner's *Fowler* Brief, at pp. 45–53, for a discussion of the prosecutor's charging power in North Carolina.

[36] The appellant contended that the deceased had fired the first shot, and that the fatal shots had been returned in self defense. *State* v. *Blackwelder*, *supra*, 109 S. E., at 646. Although the North Carolina Supreme Court held that there was evidence to support both the prosecutor's and the appellant's theory of the slaying (and under appellant's theory, a charge of second degree murder or man-

here is that the solicitor exercised his unfettered discretion to proceed on an irrational theory of the case in order to secure a non-capital conviction, for, at the time of this trial, North Carolina had a "mandatory" death penalty for first degree murder.[37]

The solicitor's power to *nolle prosequi* cases may also be used arbitrarily in this connection. For example, five open murder indictments, sufficient to charge capital first degree murder, were returned against Albert Carey, Anthony Carey, James C. Mitchell, Harold Givens, and Antonio Dorsey for a June 1973 killing during the course of a service station robbery in Charlotte, North Carolina. The State's evidence, as recounted by the Supreme Court of North Carolina in *State* v. *Anthony Carey*, 285 N. C. 497, 206 S. E. 2d 213, 215–217 (1974), indicated that the two Careys and Dorsey remained in a car parked near the service station, while Mitchell and Givens went inside to rob it. During the course of the robbery, Mitchell shot and killed an attendant. Mitchell was allowed to plead guilty to second degree murder, was sentenced to 30 years imprisonment,[38] and testified against the Careys at their respective trials for first degree murder. Both Careys were convicted and sentenced to death. A *nolle prosequi* was entered against Givens[39] and Dorsey.[40] The Supreme Court of North

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slaughter might be warranted, see p. 35, *infra*), any evidence in mitigation was introduced by the defendant. The State's decision to proceed on only second degree charges was made, of course, before the trial began.

[37] See *State* v. *Hawley*, 229 N. S. 167, 48 S. E. 2d 35 (1948).

[38] *State* v. *James C. Mitchell*, Mecklenburg County Super. Ct. No. 73-CR-61589 (Dec. 17, 1973).

[39] *State* v. *Harold N. Givens*, Mecklenburg County Super. Ct. No. 73-CR-61590 (judgment of nonsuit granted November, 1973); see *State* v. *Albert Lewis Carey, Jr.*, 288 N. C. 254, 218 S. E. 2d 387, 390 (1975).

[40] *State* v. *Antonio Dorsey*, Mecklenburg County Super. Ct. No. 73-CR-61587 (*nolle prosequi* entered December 19, 1974).

Carolina reversed the convictions and death sentences of the two Careys under *State* v. *Britt*, 285 N. C. 256, 204 S. E. 2d 817 (1974), see pp. 22–24, *supra*, because the trial courts had refused to let defense counsel inform the respective juries that death was the punishment for first degree murder. *State* v. *Anthony Carey*, *supra*; *State* v. *Albert Carey*, 285 N. C. 500, 206 S. E. 2d 222 (1974). Albert Carey was retried and was again convicted of first degree murder and sentenced to death;[41] his conviction and sentence were affirmed on appeal. *State* v. *Carey*, 288 N. C. 254, 218 S. E. 2d 387 (1975).[42] Anthony Carey was not retried a second time, however, and the State entered a *nolle prosequi* on December 19, 1974.[43] The reasons for the differing fates of the Careys, Dorsey, Givens, and Mitchell are utterly mystifying in view of their equal culpability under settled doctrines of felony murder. See *State* v. *Fox*, *supra*, 175 S. E. 2d, at 571. Albert Carey's death sentence is truly "cruel and unusual in the same way that being struck by lightning is cruel and unusual." *Furman* v. *Georgia*, 408 U. S. 238, 309 (1972) (concurring opinion of MR. JUSTICE STEWART).[44]

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[41] *State* v. *Albert Carey*, Mecklenburg County Super. Ct. No. 73-CR-46178, 61586 (December 19, 1974).

[42] This conviction and death sentence are now pending in this Court on a petition for certiorari, *Carey* v. *North Carolina*, No. 75-5960.

[43] *State* v. *Anthony Carey*, Mecklenburg County Super. Ct. No. 73-CR-46179.

[44] There are also cases in which one codefendant in a felony murder situation has been indicted for second degree murder, while for inexplicable reasons the other codefendants have been charged by the grand jury with first degree murder. In *State* v. *Maynard*, 247 N. C. 462, 101 S. E. 2d 340 (1958), five defendants were indicted for a robbery murder, but one of them "tendered a plea of guilty of murder in the second degree as charged against her in the indictment, which plea the State accepted." 101 S. E. 2d, at 341. The other four defendants either pleaded guilty to, or were convicted of, first degree murder. (*Ibid.*)

2. *Plea Bargaining*

In both this case and the *Carey* cases, some of the capitally charged defendants were allowed to plead guilty to lesser charges and some were not. The similarity between the cases ends there, however, for in *State* v. *Carey*, 288 N. C. 254, 218 S. E. 2d 387 (1975), the actual slayer (under the State's theory) was allowed to plead guilty, while here this defendant's attempts to enter a plea of noncapital offenses were rebuffed, see page 11, *supra*. It may well be that judgments or impressions as to differing degrees of culpability among codefendants and between felony-murder cases are reflected here. But the stark fact is that these judgments have no basis in the North Carolina law of homicide and are being made on an *ad hoc* footing by different solicitors at different times, pursuant to no common policy and subject to no regular or lawful control. The *legislative* policy of the "mandatory" death penalty applies equally in all of these cases or in none. The Supreme Court of North Carolina succinctly summarized the paradox:

> "[i]t is perfectly clear from the evidence that 'Peanut' Mitchell was guilty of murder in the first degree, although he was later permitted to plead guilty to second degree murder. *State* v. *Fox, supra*, holds in such a situation that all the conspirators are guilty of murder in the first degree."

State v. *Albert Lewis Carey, Jr., supra*, 218 S. E. 2d, at 400. See also *State* v. *Bennett*, 226 N. C. 82, 36 S. E. 2d 708, 709 (1946) (guilty plea to second degree murder allowed for killing committed during robbery of filling station).

3. *Jury Discretion*

The oft-repeated doctrinal statement that upon an indictment charging "murder committed in the perpetration of a robbery, the verdict would be restricted to murder in the first degree or not guilty." *State* v. *Linney*, 212 N. C. 739, 194 S. E. 470, 471 (1938),[45] does not in fact describe the jury's dispensing power in a felony murder case. For a number of reasons, a North Carolina jury has a broad license to spare—or to declare forfeit—the life of a defendant charged with first degree felony murder.[46]

First, the jury may simply choose to convict the defendant of the predicate felony without finding him guilty on the capital first degree murder charge. Where (as in petitioners' case) the jury convicts *both* for the predicate felony and the murder, judgment will be arrested on the former.[47] But sympathetic jurors nevertheless retain the power to convict the defendant only of the nonhomicide offense and spare his life.[48] In *State* v.

[45] See, *e. g.*, *State* v. *Griffin*, 280 N. C. 142, 185 S. E. 2d 149, 151 (1971); *State* v. *Duboise*, 279 N. C. 73, 181 S. E. 2d 393, 397 (1971); *State* v. *Roseman*, 279 N. C. 573, 184 S. E. 2d 289, 294 (1971); *State* v. *Hairston*, 280 N. C. 220, 185 S. E. 2d 633, 642–643 (1972); *State* v. *Bryant*, 280 N. C. 531, 187 S. E. 2d 111, 114 (1972); *State* v. *Bentley*, 223 N. C. 563, 27 S. E. 2d 738, 741 (1943); *State* v. *Doss*, 279 N. C. 413, 183 S. E. 2d 671, 679 (1971).

[46] See generally Petitioner's *Fowler* Brief, at 62–95.

[47] See *State* v. *Moore*, 284 N. C. 485, 202 S. E. 2d 169, 176 (1974); *State* v. *Carroll*, 282 N. C. 326, 193 S. E. 2d 85, 89–90 (1972); *State* v. *Peele*, 281 N. C. 253, 188 S. E. 2d 326, 331–332 (1972).

[48] The extent of this power is determined by an antecedent exercise of discretion by the prosecutor. In *State* v. *Thompson*, 280 N. C. 202, 185 S. E. 2d 666 (1972), a defendant was charged with first degree murder, felonious breaking and entering, and felonious larceny. The North Carolina Supreme Court ruled that submission of the breaking and entering charge to the jury was proper:

"Although a remote possibility, conceivably the jury could have found beyond a reasonable doubt that defendant feloniously broke into and entered the Mackey apartment but not that defendant shot and killed Ernest Mackey. Under appropriate instructions as to this contingency, it was proper to submit the felonious breaking and entering count in the separate indictment. (Of course there would have been no basis for submitting the felonious breaking and

Rodgers, 216 N. C. 572, 5 S. E. 2d 831 (1939), for example, three defendants were charged with a particularly aggravated felony murder,[49] and their jury was instructed that it could convict them of murder, first degree burglary, conspiracy, second degree burglary, and robbery with firearms. The jury acquitted the defendants of the capital charges (first degree murder and burglary) and convicted them of the three noncapital ones.[50] It must be remembered that most of the predicate felonies for

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entering if defendant had been tried solely on the murder indictment.)"

185 S. E. 2d, at 675.

[49] The Supreme Court of North Carolina detailed the following facts concerning the crime with which defendants were charged:

"The record discloses that Tom Moore, a man about sixty years of age, lived alone in a farm house in Robeson County. Harvey Smith was with him in his home on the night of January 11, 1939. They left the sitting room about 8:30 P. M. and went out the back door to a pump to get a bucket of water. As they were returning with the water, three armed men, Bully Rodgers and Peter Locklear each with a pistol and Wealthy Lowry with a shotgun, crawled from under the corner of the house, covered Moore and Smith with their firearms, told them to hold up their hands, marched them around at the point of their guns and into the house where they tortured Moore by burning his feet in the fire and threatening to kill both of them if they did not tell where Moore's money was. They searched the house, found Moore's pocket book containing $19, which they took and then forced Moore and Smith into an old smokehouse in the yard, locked the door and left them there.

"It took Moore and Smith about twenty-five minutes to get out of the smokehouse, which they did by prising the door off the hinges. Moore was taken into the hospital and died of pneumonia about ten days later."

State v. *Rodgers*, *supra*, 5 S. E. 2d, at 831.

[50] *Cf. State* v. *Glenn*, 22 N. C. App. 6, 205 S. E. 2d 352 (1974), where defendant was charged with the first degree murder of a deputy sheriff during a bank robbery, and with kidnapping, felonious assault with intent to kill, and armed bank robbery. The jury convicted on the latter three counts but "was unable to agree on the charge of murder." *Id.*, at 352.

first degree felony murder are themselves serious offenses carrying heavy penalties, so that conviction on such charges gives the jury an option of sparing the defendant's life while yet assuring his prolonged confinement.

Second, the North Carolina rule that "[i]f there is any evidence, or if any inference can be fairly deduced therefrom, tending to show one of the lower grades of murder, it is then the duty of the trial court under appropriate instructions to submit that view to the jury," *State* v. *Spivey*, 151 N. C. 676, 65 S. E. 995, 999 (1909), affords trial judges enormous discretion to charge or not charge lesser offenses. In *State* v. *Knight*, 248 N. C. 384, 103 S. E. 2d 452 (1958), the Supreme Court of North Carolina reversed the first degree murder conviction of a defendant on the ground that erroneous jury instructions were given. The Court noted that "[i]t is manifest that the State's evidence was sufficient to carry the case to the jury on the issue of murder in the first degree and to justify the inference that the deceased was killed by the defendant in an attempt to perpetrate the felony of rape." 103 S. E. 2d, at 454–455. Although the victim had been forcibly removed from her home during the course of a violent struggle and although "she had been cut, beaten, mutilated and killed in a shocking manner," 103 S. E. 2d, at 453, the court ruled that the defendant's confession (stating that he had made sexual overtures to her and that she had "tried to hit him," whereupon he struck her with a poker, 103 S. E. 2d, at 456) was sufficient evidence to require that "the jury be permitted to consider a lesser degree of homicide than murder in the first degree," (*ibid.*). The Court found that this evidence "was sufficient to justify, though not require, the inference of a lower degree of homicide than murder in the first degree." 103 S. E. 2d, at 456–457.

Third, when a trial judge submits lesser-included-offense instructions to the jury with *no* evidentiary support, an ensuing conviction on the unsupported lesser

will nevertheless be affirmed on appeal. "An error on the side of mercy is not reversible. . . ." *State* v. *Fowler*, 151 N. C. 731, 66 S. E. 567 (1909).[51] "[W]hatever the reasoning of the jury, the prisoner has no cause to complain that he was not convicted of the higher offense." *State* v. *Matthews*, 142 N. C. 621, 55 S. E. 342, 344 (1906). In *State* v. *Bentley*, 223 N. C. 563, 27 S. E. 2d 738, 740 (1943), the Supreme Court of North Carolina declared:

> "[i]f we are to understand the appellant to base his demand for discharge merely on the fact that the jury by an act of grace has found him guilty of a minor offense, of which there is no evidence, instead of the more serious offense charged, this is to look a gift horse in the mouth; more especially,

[51] See *State* v. *Rowe*, 155 N. C. 436, 71 S. E. 332, 337 (1911); *State* v. *Vestal*, 283 N. C. 249, 195 S. E. 2d 297, 299–300 (1973); *State* v. *Freeman*, 275 N. C. 662, 170 S. E. 2d 461, 466 (1969). In *State* v. *Quick*, 150 N. C. 820, 64 S. E. 168 (1909), the Court held that the giving of a manslaughter charge in a first degree murder case had been proper:

"[s]uppose the court erroneously submitted to the jury a view of the case not supported by evidence whereby the jury were permitted, if they saw fit, to convict of manslaughter instead of murder, what right has the defendant to complain? It is an error prejudicial to the state, and not to him."

See also *State* v. *Jones*, 3 N. C. App. 455, 165 S. E. 2d 36, 39 (1969):

"However, the rule with respect to inconsistent verdicts on different counts in a bill of indictment is succinctly stated in 3 Strong, N. C. Index 2d, Criminal Law, § 124, as follows:

"'It is not required that the verdict be consistent; therefore a verdict of guilty of a lesser degree of the crime when all the evidence points to the graver crime, although illogical and incongruous, or a verdict of guilty on one count and not guilty on the other, when the same acts results in both offenses, will not be disturbed.'"

And cf. *State* v. *Davis*, 214 N. C. 787, 1 S. E. 2d 104, 108 (1939): "a jury is not required to be consistent and mere inconsistency will not invalidate the verdict."

> since the conclusion that there is no evidence must be reached by conceding that all the evidence, including the admission of the defendant, points to a graver crime. Such verdicts occur now and then, despite the efforts of the courts to discourage them. When they do, although illogical or even incongruous, since they are favorable to the accused, it is settled law that they will not be disturbed."

This practice makes a shambles of the notion that the jury is without power to convict of lesser offenses in felony murder cases, for lessers have frequently been submitted in situations where there was no "evidence or . . . any inference [that] can be fairly deduced therefrom, tending to show one of the lower grades of murder." *State* v. *Spivey, supra*, 103 S. E. 2d, at 456. Cf. *State* v. *Blackwelder, supra*. In *State* v. *Bell*, 205 N. C. 225, 171 S. E. 50 (1933), three defendants were convicted of second degree murder, 171 S. E., at 51, in a case where "the homicide was committed in the perpetration of the robbery. . . . It is clear that the attempted robbery and the homicide grew out of the same transaction." (*Ibid.*).[52] The facts of the case[53] reveal a cold-blooded felony

[52] "The case was tried upon the theory that if the defendants conspired to burglarize or to rob the home of George Dryman and a murder was committed by any one of the conspirators in the attempted perpetration of the burglary or robbery, each and all of the defendants would be guilty of the murder. This is a correct proposition of law." *State* v. *Bell, supra*, 171 S. E., at 51.

[53] "The deceased was a farmer eighty-four years of age, living in Macon County with his three maiden daughters. It was known that he kept a sum of money, which later proved to be about $2,300, in a trunk in his house. The defendants conceived the idea of robbing the old man of his money, so on the night of January 23, 1933, they first went to the home of Ernest Stamey and there masked themselves. They then got in Robert Bell's car and were driven to a point near the Dryman home. Here, the other defendants left the car with the understanding that Robert Bell should drive down

murder, yet the North Carolina Supreme Court found no error [54] in the submission of the second degree murder charge.[55] See also *State* v. *Streeton*, 231 N. C. 301, 56 S. E. 2d 649 (1949) (defendant convicted of first degree murder for a killing in the course of a kidnapping; jury was instructed on both second degree murder and manslaughter, 56 S. E. 2d, at 651); *State* v. *Alston*, 215 N. C. 713, 3 S. E. 2d 11, 12–13 (1939) (manslaughter instruction given where defendant killed 103 year old woman during robbery).

Fourth, as noted in Petitioner's *Fowler* Brief, at pp. 79–80, a North Carolina jury has the statutory power in felony cases to find a defendant guilty of either an attempt to commit the crime charged in the indictment or an assault with intent to commit that crime.

Finally, the jury may nullify the death penalty by simply refusing to convict in sympathetic cases. As this Court noted in *McGautha* v. *California*, 402 U. S. 183 (1971), there was a "rebellion against the common-law

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the Georgia road and wait there for his confederates and pick them up after they had accomplished the robbery.

"In attempting to perpetuate the robbery, one of the conspirators struck George Dryman over the head with a board, inflicting injuries from which he died about three weeks later. They did not get the money." *State* v. *Bell*, *supra*, 171 S. E., at 50–51.

[54] Defendants Bell's conviction was reversed on double jeopardy grounds, however, since he had been acquitted of a burglary charge arising out of this incident before the murder trial. *State* v. *Bell*, *supra*, 171 S. E., at 51–52.

[55] Surprisingly, the North Carolina Supreme Court has cited *Bell* for the proposition that all participants in a felony murder are guilty of *first* degree murder:

"'[W]hen a conspiracy is formed to commit a robbery or burglary, and a murder is committed by any one of the conspirators in the attempted perpetration of the crime, each and all of the conspirators are guilty of murder in the first degree.' [Quoting *State* v. *Fox*, 277 N. C. 1, 175 S. E. 2d 561 (1970).] Accord, *State* v. *Bell*, 205 N. C. 225, 171 S. E. 50 (1933)." *State* v. *Carey*, 285 N. C. 497, 206 S. E. 2d 213, 218–219 (1974).

rule imposing a mandatory death sentence on all convicted murderers," *id.*, at 198, and "jurors on occasion took the law into their own hands in [murder] cases which were [capital] . . . but which nevertheless were clearly inappropriate for the death penalty. In such cases they simply refused to convict of the capital offense," *id.*, at 199. See also *State* v. *Green*, 246 N. C. 717, 100 S. E. 2d 52, 53–54 (1957); *State* v. *Roy*, 233 N. C. 558, 64 S. E. 2d 840, 841 (1951); *State* v. *Webb*, 20 N. C. App. 199, 200 S. E. 2d 840, 841 (1973).

4. *Executive Clemency*

Suffice it to say of the final lottery [56] that in felony murder cases, the judgments which must inevitably be made are particularly subjective:

> "Where two or more persons are charged with the commission of the same capital offense, an occurrence typical in instances of felony murder . . . evaluating the relative guilt of each defendant becomes critical to the clemency outcome. The principle here that the acts of one shall be the acts of all, insofar as it fails to recognize relative degrees of culpability, leaves to the clemency authority the opportunity to inquire into the defendant's personal responsibility and the directness of his participation in the crime. Thus, the clemency authority would desire to know who masterminded the plan, who did the actual killing, what role the defendant played. Was the defendant the driver (in a robbery)? The lookout? Was the agreement among all the 'partners in crime' to kill if necessary? The answers to these questions will aid the clemency authority in judging the relative accountability of the individual

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[56] See generally Brief for Petitioner, *Fowler* v. *North Carolina*, No. 73-7031, at 95–100.

participants, in determining who are less culpable in fact though not in law." [57]

. . . . . .

The various forms of arbitrary selectivity remaining under North Carolina's "mandatory" death penalty procedure insure, for felony murder convicts as for others, that there can and will be no rational basis for determining who lives and who is killed. The North Carolina Supreme Court has said that "since each [of petitioners and their accomplices] admitted he was one of the four who conspired to rob the shop, legally it makes no difference . . . [who] fired the shot" that killed Mrs. Butler. *State* v. *Woodson*, 287 N. C. 578, 215 S. E. 2d 607, 615 (1975). *Legally* it makes no difference. That is, so far as North Carolina's legislated policies for the use of capital punishment go, it makes no difference. Yet, two die—two live; and this Court doubtless will be asked by the respondent and the Government as *amicus curiae* to sustain the death penalty in deference to "legislative judgment." [58] *Whose* judgment was it that *these* petitioners die? Someone's; no one's; there is no answer; the answer is unknowable because the system is so arbitrary. In the end perhaps no one will have made the judgment—certainly, no one will have made it rationally or consistently with any ascertainable penal policy—but petitioners will nonetheless be dead. We submit it is cruel and unusual punishment.

III. *The Excessive Cruelty of Death*

To the submissions made in Part III of Petitioner's *Fowler* Brief, at 102–104, we would add the discussion in Part III of the Brief for Petitioner in *Jurek* v. *Texas*, No. 75–5394. We respectfully hope that the Court will

[57] Note, Executive Clemency in Capital Cases, 39 N. Y. U. L. Rev. 136, 163 (1964).

[58] Brief for the *United States* as *amicus curiae* in *Fowler* v. *North Carolina*, No. 73–7031, at 11.

consent to consider those two briefs in connection with petitioners' case.

CONCLUSION

The penalty of death imposed upon petitioners James Tyrone Woodson and Luby Waxton is a cruel and unusual punishment forbidden by the Eighth and Fourteenth Amendments. The judgments of the Supreme Court of North Carolina should therefore be reversed insofar as they affirm their death sentences.

Respectfully submitted,

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APPENDIX A

The following North Carolina defendants have been sentenced to death under the procedures established by N. C. Session Laws 1973 (2nd Sess. 1974), c. 1201, § 1, amending N. C. Gen. Stat. § 14–17 (1974 cum. supp.):

1. *Donald Lee Harding* (white) (first degree murder, 3 counts), Iredell County Super. Ct., Nos. 75–CR–9763, 75–CR–9764, 75–CR–9803 (sentenced to death Feb. 6, 1976).
2. *Gregory Cousin* (black) (murder, 2 counts), Cumberland County Super. Ct., Nos. 75–CR–26679, 26689 (sentenced to death, January 28, 1976).
3. *Joseph Seaborn* (black) (first degree murder), Martin County Super. Ct., No. 75–CR–3810 (sentenced to death January 6, 1976).
4. *Frankie Squires* (black) (first degree murder), Martin County Super. Ct., No. 75–CR–3809 (sentenced to death Jan. 16, 1976).
5. *Faye Beatrice Brown* (black) (first degree murder), Martin County Super. Ct., No. 75–CR–3812 (sentenced to death Jan. 16, 1976).
6. *John Newman Montgomery* (white) (first degree rape), Forsythe County Super. Ct., No. 75–CR–28982 (sentenced to death January 16, 1976).
7. *Auduin Brant Jackson* (black) (first degree murder), Wake County Super. Ct., No. 75–CR–32655 (sentenced to death January 14, 1976).
8. *Margie Boykins* (white) (first degree murder), Johnston County Super. Ct., No. 75–CR–10755 (sentenced to death Jan. 2, 1976).
9. *Willie Lee Williams* (black) (first degree murder), New Hanover County Super. Ct., No.
10. *James Vernon Smith* (white) (first degree murder), Stokes County Super. Ct., No. 75–CR–843 (sentenced to death Dec. 27, 1975).
11. *Bobby Bowden* (black) (murder, 2 counts), Cumberland County Super. Ct., Nos. 75–CR–26675, 75–CR–26676 (sentenced to death Dec. 23, 1975).
12. *Charles Young* (black) murder), Blaydon County Super. Ct., No. 75–CR–3811 (sentenced to death Dec. 5, 1975).
13. *Donald Stahfield* (white) (first degree murder), Onslow County Super. Ct., No. 75–CR–14941 (sentenced to death Nov. 21, 1975).

14. *Pernell James Ham* (white) (first degree murder), Onslow County Super. Ct., No. 75–CR–14962 (sentenced to death Nov. 21, 1975).
15. *Michael Anthony May* (black) (first degree murder), Forsythe County Super. Ct., No. 75–CR–8591 (sentenced to death Nov. 19, 1975).
16. *Herman Leroy Riddick* (black) (first degree murder), Pasquotank County Super. Ct., No. 75–CR–1983 (sentenced to death Nov. 14, 1975).
17. *Kim Allen Manuel* (white) (first degree murder), Catawba County Super. Ct., No. 75–CR–6470 (sentenced to death Nov. 7, 1975).
18. *Joe Lewis Harris* (black) (first degree murder), Wake County Super. Ct., Nos. 75–CR–2199, 75–CR–1959, 75–CR–1958, 75–CR–1956 (sentenced to death Nov. 4, 1975).
19. *Nelson Caldwell Montgomery* (black) (first degree murder), Catawba County Super. Ct., No. 75–CR–4302 (sentenced to death Oct. 10, 1975).
20. *Harry F. Hammonds* (black) (first degree murder), Anson County Super. Ct., No. 75–CR–2618 (sentenced to death Sept. 11, 1975).
21. *Gregory James Taylor* (black) (first degree murder), Mecklenburg County Super. Ct., No. 75–CR– (sentenced to death Sept. 11, 1975).
22. *David Earl Locklear* (native American) (first degree murder), Robeson County Super. Ct., No. 75–CR–1274 (sentenced to death Sept. 11, 1975).
23. *William Earl Matthews* (black) (first degree murder), Wilson County Super. Ct., No. 75–CR–2022 (sentenced to death Aug. 28, 1975).
24. *Victor Foust* (black) (first degree murder), Wilson County Super. Ct., No. 75–CR–2025 (sentenced to death Aug. 28, 1975).
25. *James Junior Biggs* (black) (first degree murder), Chowar County Super. Ct., No. 75–CR–1096 (sentenced to death Aug. 27, 1975).
26. *Tamarcus Swift* (black) (first degree murder), Wayne County Super Ct., No. 75–CR–6754 (sentenced to death Aug. 22, 1975).
27. *McKinley Williams* (black) (first degree murder), Halifax County Super. Ct., No. 75–CR–808 (sentenced to death Aug. 6, 1975).

28. *James C. Johnson* (black) (first degree murder), Montgomery County Super. Ct., No. 75-CR-631 (sentenced to death July 25, 1975).
29. *Charles Alvin* ( ) (first degree murder), Montgomery County Super. Ct., No. 75-CR-614 (sentenced to death July 25, 1975).
30. *Willard Warren* (white) (first degree murder), Haywood County Super. Ct., No. 75-CR-1286 (sentenced to death July 12, 1975).
31. *Elzie Lee McCall* (white) (first degree murder), Transylvania County Super. Ct., No. 75-CR-204 (sentenced to death July 11, 1975).
32. *Dewie L. Gray* (black) (first degree rape), Mecklenburg County Super. Ct., No. 75-CR-2774 (sentenced to death June 26, 1975).
33. *Hillary Boyce* (black) (first degree murder), Beaufort County Super. Ct., No. 75-CR-435 (sentenced to death July 26, 1975).
34. *Johnny Lawrence* (black) (first degree murder), Beaufort County Super. Ct., No. 75-CR-436 (sentenced to death June 26, 1975).
35. *George Phifer* (black) (first degree murder), Beaufort County Super. Ct., No. 75-CR-434 (sentenced to death June 26, 1975).
36. *Robert L. Thompson* (black) (first degree rape), Robeson County Super. Ct., No. 75-CR-2180 (sentenced to death June 16, 1975).
37. *Willie McEachin* (black) (first degree rape), Robeson County Super. Ct., No. 75-CR-2366 (sentenced to death June 16, 1975).
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42. *Coleman Covington* (black) (first degree murder), Robeson County Super. Ct., No. 74-CR-18381 (sentenced to death May 19, 1975).
43. *James D. Harrill* (white) (first degree murder), Rutherford County Super. Ct., No. 75-CR-066D (sentenced to death May 16, 1975).
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54. *James Woodson* (black) (first degree murder), Harnett County Super Ct., No. 74-CR-5054 (sentenced to death Dec. 9, 1974).
55. *Luby Waxton* (black) (first degree murder), Chowan County Super. Ct., No. 75-CR-1096 (sentenced to death Dec. 9, 1974).

56. *Joe Lee Cobbs* (native American) (first degree murder), Halifax County Super. Ct., No. 74–CR–4143 (sentenced to death Nov. 24, 1974).
57. *Carl Miller* (black) (first degree rape), Catawba County Super. Ct., No. 74–CR–13135 (sentenced to death Oct. 31, 1974).
58. *Artis McClain* (black) (first degree rape), Catawba County Super. Ct., No. 74–CR–13138 (sentenced to death Oct. 31, 1974).
59. *Larry C. Clark* (black) (first degree rape), Catawba County Super. Ct., No. 74–CR–13140 (sentenced to death Oct. 31, 1974).
60. *Wallace C. Lanford* (black) (first degree murder), Gaston County Super. Ct., No. 74–CR–9539 (sentenced to death Oct. 30, 1974).
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62. *Ted Carter* (white) (first degree murder), Gaston County Super. Ct., No. 74–CR–18028 (sentenced to death Aug. 2, 1974).
63. *Henry A. Tatum* (black) (first degree murder), Durham County Super. Ct., No. 74–16919 (sentenced to death July 21, 1974).

Service of the within *Brief for Respondent, State of North Carolina* and receipt of a copy thereof is hereby admitted this the _____ day of March, A.D. 1976.

by: _____

on behalf of: _____

IN THE

Supreme Court of the United States

TERM, 1975

No. 75-5491

JAMES TYRONE WOODSON AND LUBY WAXTON,
Petitioners,

v.

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA,
Respondent.

ON WRIT OF CERTIORARI TO THE SUPREME COURT
OF NORTH CAROLINA

BRIEF FOR THE RESPONDENT

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No. 75-5491

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v.

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA,

Respondent.

BRIEF FOR RESPONDENT

CONSTITUTIONAL AND STATUTORY PROVISIONS INVOLVED

The Preamble of the Constitution of the United States which provides:

> We the people . . . in order to . . . establish justice, insure domestic tranquility . . . promote the general welfare . . . do ordain and establish this Constitution . . . .

Article IV, Section 4 of the Constitution of the United States which provides:

> The United States shall guarantee to every state in this Union a Republican form of government . . . .

Article V of the Constitution of the United States which provides:

> . . . (A)mendments, . . . shall be valid to all intents and purposes, as part of this Constitution . . . .

The Fifth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States which provides:

> No person shall be held to answer for a capital . . .crime, unless on a presentment or indictment of a Grand Jury, . . . ; nor shall any person be subject for the same offense to be twice put in jeopardy of life or limb; . . . nor be deprived of life, liberty, or property without due process of law; . . . .

The Sixth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States which provides:

> In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall enjoy the right to a . . . trial by an impartial jury . . . .

The Eighth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States which provides:

> Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted.

The Tenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States which provides:

> The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people.

The Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States which provides:

> . . . (N)or shall any state deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; . . . .

Article I, Section 1 of the Constitution of North Carolina which provides:

> . . .(A)ll persons are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life (and) liberty . . . .

Article I, Section 18 of the Constitution of North Carolina which provides:

> All Courts shall be open to every person for an injury done him in his . . . person . . . and shall have remedy by due course of law; and right and justice shall be administered without favor, denial, or delay.

Article I, Section 19 of the Constitution of North Carolina which provides:

> No person shall be taken, imprisoned, . . . or in any manner deprived of his life, liberty, or property, but by the law of the land. No person shall be denied the equal protection of the laws; nor shall any person be subjected to discrimination by the State because of race, color, religion, or national origin.

Article I, Section 22 of the Constitution of North Carolina which provides:

> . . .(N)o person shall be put to answer any criminal charge but by indictment, presentment, or impeachment. But any person, when represented by counsel, may, . . . waive indictment in noncapital cases.

Article I, Section 24 of the Constitution of North Carolina, which provides:

> No person shall be convicted of any crime but by the unanimous verdict of a jury in open court . . . .

Article I, Section 27 of the Constitution of North Carolina which provides:

> Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel or unusual punishments inflicted.

Article III, Section 5(6) of the North Carolina Constitution, which provides:

> The Governor may grant reprieves, commutations, and pardons after conviction, for all offenses (except in cases of impeachment), upon such conditions as he may think proper . . . .

Article IV, Section 18(1) of the North Carolina Constitution, which provides:

> . . .(A) District Attorney shall be chosen for a term of four years by the qualified voters . . . . The District Attorney shall . . . be responsible for the prosecution on behalf of the State of all criminal actions in the Superior Courts of his district . . . .

Article XI, Section 1 of the North Carolina Constitution, which provides:

> The following punishments only shall be known to the laws of this State: death, imprisonment, fines, removal from office, and disqualification to hold . . . any office . . . .

Article XI, Section 2 of the North Carolina Constitution which provides:

> . . .(M)urder, arson, burglary, and rape, and these only, may be punishable with death, if the General Assembly shall so enact.

North Carolina General Statute Section 9-14 which provides:

> Each juror shall swear or affirm that he will truthfully and without prejudice or partiality try all issues . . . and render true verdicts according to the evidence . . . .

North Carolina General Statute Section 11-1 which provides:

> Whereas, lawful oaths for the discovery of truth and establishing right are necessary and highly conducive to the important end of good government; and being most solemn appeals to Almighty God, as the omniscient witness of truth and the just and omnipotent avenger of falsehood, such oaths, therefore, ought to be taken and administered with the utmost solemnity.

North Carolina General Statute Section 11-2, which provides:

> Judges . . . and other persons who may be empowered to administer oaths, shall . . . require the party sworn to lay his hand upon the Holy Evangelists of Almighty God, in token of his engagement to speak the truth, as he hopes to be saved in the way and method of salvation pointed out in that blessed volume; and in further token that, if he should swerve from the truth, he may be justly deprived of all the blessings of the Gospel, and made liable to that vengeance which he has imprecated on his own head.

North Carolina General Statute Section 11-6, which provides:

> *Oath to support Constitution of United States; all officers take.*–All members of the General Assembly, and all officers who shall be elected

or appointed to any office of trust or profit within the State, shall, agreeably to act of Congress, take the following oath or affirmation: *'I, A.B., do solemnly swear that I will support the Constitution of the United States; so help me, God.'*; which oath shall be taken before they enter upon the execution of the duties of the office.

North Carolina General Statute Section 11-7, which provides:

> *Oath or affirmation to support State Constitution; all officers to take.*–Every . . . person who shall be chosen or appointed to hold any office of trust or profit in the State, shall, before taking his seat or entering upon the execution of the office, take and subscribe the following oath or affirmation: *'I, A.B., do solemnly and sincerely swear that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to the State of North Carolina, and to the constitutional powers and authorities which are or may be established for the government thereof; and that I will endeavor to support, maintain and defend the Constitution of said State, not inconsistent with the Constitution of the United States, to the best of my knowledge and ability; so help me, God.'*

North Carolina General Statute Section 11-11 which provides:

> The oath of office to be taken by . . . solicitors . . . (is) . . . "I . . . swear . . . I will, in the execution of my office, endeavor to have the criminal laws fairly and impartially administered, so far as in me lies, according to the best of my knowledge and ability; so help me, God."

North Carolina General Statute Section 14-230, which provides:

> *Willfully failing to discharge duties.* If any . . . official of any State institutions, or of any county, city or town, shall willfully omit, neglect or refuse to discharge any of the duties of his office, for default whereof it is not elsewhere provided that he shall be indicted, he shall be guilty of a misdemeanor. If it shall be proved that such officer, after his qualification, willfully and corruptly omitted, neglected or refused to discharge any of the duties of his office, or willfully and corruptly violated his oath of office according to the true intent and meaning thereof, such officer shall be guilty of misbehavior in office, and shall be punished by removal therefrom under the sentence of the court as a part of the punishment for the offense, and shall also be fined or imprisoned in the discretion of the court.

North Carolina General Statute Section 14-17, which provides:

> A murder which shall be perpetrated by means of poison, lying in wait, imprisonment, starving, torture, or by any other kind of willful, deliberate and premediated killing, or which shall be committed in the perpetration or attempt to perpetrate any arson, rape, robbery, kidnapping, burglary or other felony, shall be deemed to be murder in the first degree and shall be punished with death . . . .

North Carolina General Statute Section 15-187, which provides:

> Death by electrocution under sentence of law is hereby abolished and death by the administration of lethal gas substituted therefor.

North Carolina General Statute Section 15-188, which provides:

> The mode of executing a death sentence must in every case be by causing the convict or felon

to inhale lethal gas of sufficient quantity to cause death, and the administration of such lethal gas must be continued until such convict or felon is dead; . . . .

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

I

IS CAPITAL PUNISHMENT, IN AND OF ITSELF, CRUEL AND UNUSUAL PUNISHMENT WITHIN THE MEANING OF THE EIGHTH AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES?

II

DOES THE MERE EXISTENCE OF THE AUTHORITY IN THE PROSECUTOR, JURY, JUDGE AND GOVERNOR TO MAKE HUMAN JUDGMENTS IN GOOD FAITH AND ACCORDING TO LAW AND THEIR OATHS OF OFFICE BRING THE NORTH CAROLINA MANDATORY DEATH PENALTY FOR FIRST DEGREE MURDER WITHIN THE PROSCRIPTIONS OF THE *FURMAN* DECISION?[1]

STATEMENT OF THE CASE

Petitioners James Tyrone Woodson and Luby Waxton, tried in Superior Court of Harnett County before the Honorable Henry McKinnon, judge presiding and a jury, were found guilty of the first degree murder of Mrs. Shirley Whittington Butler. They were sentenced to death as required by statute, N. C. Gen. Stat. §14-17. Mrs. Butler was killed on June 3, 1974, during an armed robbery of a convenience market which she

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[1] Petitioner states the two questions as a single question. However, careful analysis of the argument presented by petitioner reveals there are two separate and distinct questions raised. They are delineated and defined herein. Both are narrow legal questions involving per se rules of law, and do not involve factual questions or" as applied" principles of law. Respondent has addressed itself to both questions presented in Petitioner's brief and it may well be desirable for the Court to give a definitive answer to both.

operated. Petitioners' trial began on December 3, 1974 and resulted in their conviction and sentencing on December 9, 1974.

The State's direct evidence against petitioners consisted primarily of the testimony of two co-defendants, Leonard Maurice Tucker (hereinafter, "Tucker") and Johnnie Lee Carroll (hereinafter, "Carroll"). Tucker's and Carroll's testimony was substantially the same. The witness Tucker testified as follows: He and Petitioner Woodson had been together on June 3, 1974, drinking wine and had been discussing a robbery with Carroll and petitioner Waxton for the past few days (R. 39).[2]

Waxton came to Tucker's trailer about 9:30 p.m., asked where Woodson was and told Tucker to come with him (R. 39,43). Tucker followed Waxton to Woodson's trailer. Tucker testified that Waxton hit Woodson in the face, told him that he was going to go along with them and threatened him (R. 39). Woodson joined them.

The three men went to Waxton's trailer where they met Carroll (R. 39,45), who had borrowed his brother's car for the evening (R. 45). Woodson told Carroll that Waxton hit him because he, Woodson, was drunk (R. 39,43,45). Inside the trailer, Waxton took a nickel-plated derringer pistol from a cabinet and put it in his pocket (R. 39). Tucker took a .22 caliber automatic rifle from the couch (R. 39,43). Woodson took the rifle out of Tucker's hands and sat in the car with the rifle in his hands, according to Carroll's testimony (R. 45). Tucker testified: "Luby (Waxton) was giving all the orders" (R. 43). Carroll testified: "(w)hen Woodson took the gun from Tucker, he (Woodson) said he was going to show him that he wasn't drunk" (R. 47).

The four men got into Carroll's brother's car; Carroll drove, Woodson sat beside him on the front seat with the rifle; Waxton and Tucker sat in the back seat (R. 39). Waxton said they were going to rob the E-Z Shop, but when they arrived

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2 The reference "R." is used to designate the printed record in the Supreme Court of North Carolina.

they found customers present and drove on past the store (R. 39). They stopped the car briefly while Woodson test-fired the rifle by shooting it into the ground twice (R. 39-40,43,45,47).

They then returned and parked near the E-Z Shop where they could see approaches to the store. "Up until the last minute Waxton had instructed Woodson to go in but changed his mind" (R. 44). Tucker accompanied Waxton into the store while Carroll, the driver, and Woodson remained in the car beside the store with the rifle in the front seat (R. 40).

Waxton told Woodson "not to let anybody in the store" (R. 40). "It was his (Woodson's) duty to cover the front door" (R. 43). Inside the store, Tucker and Waxton in turn asked Mrs. Butler, the victim, for cigarettes. After Tucker paid Mrs. Butler, she handed the requested cigarettes to Waxton who "then reached into his back pocket, pulled out the Derringer, stuck it around or about the left side of her neck and fired one shot" (R. 40). Waxton then gave the money tray from the cash register to Tucker who took it out of the store (R. 40). As Tucker walked out, he passed R.N. Stancil (R. 40), who was entering, and "told him to look out" and kept walking toward the car. Woodson had seen Stancil but had not stopped him. Woodson got out of the car with the rifle as Stancil approached, but Carroll pulled him back in the car (R. 48). Tucker then heard a second shot from inside the store, got in the car and about a couple of minutes after the second shot "Luby came out of the store walking fast with some paper money in his hand" (R. 40,45).

As they drove with the money to Waxton's mother's house, Waxton told Tucker that "he shot the man in the back" in the store (R. 40).

At the house, Tucker and Waxton counted the money in the bathroom: "(t)here was about $280 and Luby (Waxton) kept it" (R. 40). On June 4 after some conversation with Tucker about going with them (R. 41), Waxton and Woodson flew to Newark, New Jersey, where they were subsequently apprehended (R. 102-103).

On cross-examination, Tucker admitted that he had pleaded guilty to lesser charges "in an attempt to save myself"

(R. 42). "I was told that I would have to testify against Luby Waxton and I agreed to do that in return for the State Attorney to accept a lesser plea." Tucker stated that he "was afraid of Waxton" (R. 43), but added that "Waxton didn't threaten any of us" (R. 44) to force their participation in the robbery. Likewise, Carroll testified that "(i)t is true that I have made a trade to save my own life...I agreed to come up here and testify in order to save my own neck" (R. 47). He added that Woodson "and Tucker went willingly and did whatever they did willingly", and that he himself "participated in the crimes on my own, Luby did not make me" (R. 48).

After the State rested its case (R. 57), a hearing was held in the absence of the jury at which petitioner Waxton tendered a guilty plea to charges of armed robbery and accessory after the fact to murder; the same charges to which Tucker had been permitted to plead (R. 83-85). There is some indication that the District Attorney had expected a plea before trial from petitioner Woodson, but Woodson *never* tendered a guilty plea either before or during the trial (R. 70-71).

Petitioner Waxton was examined by the trial court concerning his comprehension of the tender, the possible penalty and his desire to enter pleas of guilty (R. 86). The District Attorney inquired into the terms of the plea proposed by Waxton, and in answer to the Court's inquiries to his position stated: "I cannot accept the pleas". The trial judge made no further inquiry or comment, did not act to accept the pleas of Waxton, and the trial continued (R. 87).

Both defendants offered evidence.

Petitioner Waxton testified in his defense, giving an account of the robbery that was basically similar to the accounts given by Tucker and Carroll, but explained that he had punched Woodson in the eye because of an unpaid debt (R. 88-89). Waxton also testified, *contrary to the testimony of Tucker* (R. 39-40), *Carroll* (R. 45-46), *and Woodson* (R. 101), that he had not had a pistol; that he had never owned a handgun; that he did not have a Derringer that night; that Tucker had a gun in his pocket; that Tucker shot both Mrs. Butler and Mr. Stancil, and that he (Waxton) had left the store before Tucker (R. 89-90). Waxton's testimony was basically

the same as his co-defendants' except that he gave Tucker responsibility for shooting Mrs. Butler and Stancil.

Waxton further testified that the robbery had been planned in the trailer park and that all four, including petitioner Woodson, Tucker and Carroll participated in planning the robbery (R. 94-95).

Petitioner Waxton denied forcing anyone to participate in the robbery (R. 89,92-93) and testified that the four of them, including petitioner Woodson, divided the proceeds of the robbery equally (R. 93).

Petitioner Woodson also testified. He told of a drug addiction problem in Newark, New Jersey, before his coming to North Carolina with Waxton (R. 98-99). Woodson testified that Waxton had mentioned a robbery; but that while he had never said anything to Waxton, he had told Tucker he did not want to participate (R. 99).

Woodson testified that Waxton came to his trailer, hit him for being drunk and threatened him (R. 100). Woodson testified that "(n)o one forced me in the car" (R. 100).

Woodson then admitted he took the rifle from Tucker (R. 103), and entered the car with the rifle by his side (R. 107). He did not recall any test-firing of the rifle.

Woodson testified that he heard one shot before Tucker came out, that he saw Mr. Stancil enter the store but made no effort to stop him, and then heard another shot, after which Waxton rushed out with paper money in his hand (R. 101). There was no division of the money; but he saw Waxton give his mother "something that was sparkling" (R. 101). Later that night, when Woodson and Waxton were alone when Woodson mentioned the woman victim, Waxton hit him and said he did not want to hear any more about what happened (R. 101-102). Petitioner Woodson introduced his statement to the police given on June 16, 1974 (R. 108-114).

The trial court instructed the jury that it could find petitioners guilty or not guilty of first degree murder of Mrs. Butler (R. 142-143-145) and guilty or not guilty of armed

robbery of Mrs. Butler (R. 143-144,145-146), and that it could find petitioner Waxton guilty of assault with a deadly weapon with intent to kill Mr. Stancil (R. 144), or guilty of the lesser included offense of assault with a deadly weapon inflicting serious injury to Mr. Stancil (R. 144-145), or not guilty of either assault.

On the State's theory that petitioner Woodson was an aider and abettor in the robbery, the court instructed the jury that "you cannot find Tyrone Woodson guilty of an offense unless you have also found Luby Waxton guilty of that offense, the same offense" (R. 145). The court further charged that the jury might find petitioner Woodson not guilty of any offense if it found that he had committed otherwise criminal acts under coercion and duress (R. 139). The court instructed the jury that first degree murder "is punishable by death" (R. 120).

The jury found both petitioners guilty of first degree murder and armed robbery (R. 147-148,149), and it found petitioner Waxton guilty of assault with a deadly weapon with intent to kill (R. 150). Petitioners were sentenced to death upon the murder convictions as required by statute (R. 148-149,154-155). The court allowed petitioners' motions in arrest of judgment in the robbery case because the robbery was merged into the first degree murder verdict (R. 153-154). On June 26, 1975, the Supreme Court of North Carolina affirmed those convictions and petitioners' death sentences.

HOW THE CONSTITUTIONAL QUESTION WAS PRESENTED AND DECIDED BELOW

Petitioners' pretrial motions to quash and dismiss the indictments charging them with murder on the ground that "G.S. 14-17 as presently written violates the Eighth and Fourteenth Amendments to the Constitution of the United States" because it requires the death penalty for first degree murder were denied (R. 19-20,25,35). Post-judgment motions by petitioners to arrest judgment and to set aside the verdict in the murder cases on the Eighth Amendment basis were denied (R. 151-152,153). These rulings were assigned by petitioners as error on appeal (R. 160-164), and the Supreme Court of North Carolina unanimously rejected petitioners'

claims in an opinion by Chief Justice Sharp and a concurring opinion by Justice Exum, *State v. Woodson & Waxton*, 287 N.C. 578, 215 S.E. 2d 607, 615 (1975).

Not presented for review in these two cases is the question of denial of equal protection of the law within the meaning of the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. Thus Respondent will not discuss principles set forth in this clause and cases decided thereunder.

Again, as in *Fowler*, Petitioners raise only narrow questions of law involving *per se* principles of law, i. e., does capital punishment as required by North Carolina Statute contravene either the cruel and unusual punishment clause of the Eighth or the due process clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. Thus, in disposition of these cases, both Petitioners and Respondent assume proper police investigation, indictments, arraignments, presence of competent counsel at each crucial stage of the proceedings, competency and constitutional acquisition of the evidence admitted; sufficiency of the evidence to support the verdicts, proper and constitutional allocation of burden of proof, proper and constitutional selection of the petit jury, proper and constitutional jury instructions under extant law, proper and constitutional procedures for taking and entry of verdicts, proper and constitutional procedures for entry and docketing of the judgments, and proper and constitutional procedures for state court appellate review.

SUMMARY OF ARGUMENT

The General Assembly of North Carolina, acting in response to this Court's decision in *Furman v. Georgia*, amended N.C. Gen. Stat. §14-17 to remove all discretion in setting punishment, and to make death the mandatory punishment for first degree murder and first degree rape, N.C. Gen. Stat. § 14-17, §14-21.

In amending the statute, the elected General Assembly reaffirmed the will of the people to punish certain statutorily described crimes by death, without any post-verdict sentencing discretion in either the judge or the jury. The punishment upon conviction is truly mandatory; neither the judge nor jury have

any discretion as to the choice of life imprisonment or death as punishment.

Inherent in the criminal justice system are numerous judgments required by law to be exercised by sworn officials in good faith. The good faith judgments made by the prosecutor, the grand jury, the trial judge and the petit jury in the trial of a criminal case before sentencing and the decision by the Governor as to whether to commute, reprieve or pardon are not the type of discretion addressed by *Furman v. Georgia*. The existence of the authority in these public officials, acting in good faith and according to law, does not in and of itself bring the death penalty within the prohibition of the Eighth Amendment.

Capital punishment *per se* is not proscribed by the "cruel and unusual punishment" clause of the Eighth Amendment. Further, the imposition of the death penalty as provided for by North Carolina statutes does not constitute "cruel and unusual punishment" in the context of the Eighth Amendment, as applied to the states through the due process clause of the Fourteenth Amendment.

The relative ease of legislative change and correction of errors, when compared to the finality and irreversibility of a judicially imposed constitutional prohibition, dictates, in an area of law in which so little of petitioners' argument is susceptible to proof, that legislative change is the only realistic and viable course for the development of our law to pursue.

Public acceptance, manifested through jury verdicts, public opinion polls, initiatives and referenda, and legislative reenactments belies the moral unacceptability and general public abhorrence of the death penalty asserted by petitioners.

The strong pressure of the constitutional doctrines of separation and balance of powers, as between the State and national governments, and as between the judiciary and the legislative branches, the doctrine of judicial restraint and the doctrine of *stare decisis* all require that petitioners' claims for judicial relief in these cases go unfulfilled.

ARGUMENT

I

INTRODUCTION

The General Assembly of North Carolina, in response to *Furman v. Georgia*, 408 U.S. 238 (1972) from this Court and *State v. Waddell*, 282 N.C. 431, 194 S.E. 2d 19 (1973), from the Supreme Court of North Carolina, after extensive debate enacted Chapter 1201 of the 1974 Session Laws, which modified the death penalty by limiting its application to first degree murder and first degree rape (formerly applicable to first degree murder, all rape, arson and first degree burglary) and by mandating the sentence of death in all convictions for first degree murder and first degree rape.[3]

This legislative action reaffirmed the public support for the death penalty for premeditated first degree murder and the felony-murder first degree murder.

Respondent agrees with Petitioners' observation that the amended first degree murder statute and the State Supreme Court's decision in *Waddell* has the same operative effect and does not merit extensive discussion. (Petitioners' Brief at 26).

Respondent will not burden the Court with a restatement of its positions set forth in its *Fowler* brief, but like Petitioners, we merely note that insofar as it is applicable to the instant cases, we ask that it be incorporated by reference into Respondent's brief here.

The underlying purpose of the statutory reenactment removing from the judge and jury all sentencing discretion and imposing death for a diminished category of offenses was to assure that for the most heinous crimes in North Carolina the

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3 The April 8, 1974, enactment of Chapter 1201 of the 1974 Session Laws was prospectively effective. By 1975 Session Laws, Chapter 749, Section 2 of Chapter 1201 of the 1974 Session Laws was made to apply to rapes committed after January 18, 1973 (the date of the *Waddell* decision) and before April 8, 1974.

death penalty would be imposed and that by removing *all* sentencing discretion there could be no successful *Furman* based attack on the North Carolina statute.

Respondent urges the attention of the Court to the briefs of the State of North Carolina, and its supporting *amici*, particularly the State of Utah at 3-7; the State of California at 15-22, the United States at 15-29 in *Fowler v. North Carolina*, No.73-7031 (O.T. 1974) for statements concerning the history and understanding of the origins of the Eighth Amendment ban on cruel and unusual punishment and the related guarantees of the Bill of Rights on which Respondent has relied and still relies in support of its contentions. Petitioners, by reference to the *Fowler* submission, also incorporate an Eighth Amendment history, Petitioners' *Fowler* brief at 26-39. The historical testimony of the period from 1688 to the present is but one, albeit an important, consideration in this Court's judgment in this case. Two facts in the historical discussion merit particular attention. First, Petitioners' history answers as much to Respondent's cause as do the historical discussions by Respondent and its *amici*. In their extended discussion of the Titus Oates case as a part of the understanding of the prohibition of cruel and unusual punishment (Pet. Brief at 28-34) the Petitioner remarks at 31:

> This punishment was harsh, discriminatory and arbitrary in the extreme – a manifest attempt to avenge Oates' anti-Catholic intrigues against James II . . . *by the imposition of punishments that were both unauthorized by statute and outside the jurisdiction of the sentencing court.* (Emphasis added.)

On that judgment Respondent fares well, for these death sentences are indisputably authorized by statute and handed down by courts of competent jurisdiction at the conclusion of a procedure which has undergone continuous improvement for the past two centuries and more.

Second, in all of petitioners' voluminous submissions in this case and in *Fowler*, there is scant discussion of the plain language of the Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments, which plainly contemplate capital punishment and provide for it. This omission is telling.

II

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT IS HISTORICALLY A CONSTITUTIONALLY ACCEPTABLE PUNISHMENT AS REFLECTED IN THE COMMON LAW OF ENGLAND, ITS INCORPORATION IN PLAIN LANGUAGE INTO THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES, AND THE DECISIONS OF AMERICAN COURTS SINCE RATIFICATION OF THE EIGHTH AND FOURTEENTH AMENDMENTS.

(a) The plain language of the Constitution and its Amendments make it clear that capital punishment was not intended to be forbidden.

The Constitution was not adopted in a historical vacuum as a set of abstract principles. Indeed, the Revolution had been fought in order that the Framers might guarantee to themselves and their posterity those hereditary rights of English people which the King would not guarantee to mere colonists. The Declaration of Independence makes this clear. The Constitution and Bill of Rights then were superimposed on a criminal justice system which knew well the penalty of death, and assumed it was valid. In the Constitution they provided for its imposition by Congress and the States.

The Eighth Amendment and the Fifth Amendment, both proposed by the First Congress, March 4, 1789, and ratified December 15, 1791, are part of the same Act. Nothing in the debates on The Bill of Rights indicates that the Framers believed that the Eighth Amendment prohibited the imposition and carrying out of sentences of death if due process were observed in arriving at such judgments. The language of the Amendment so provides.

Execution as a form of punishment is expressly recognized by various provisions of the United States Constitution. There were in the original Constitution indirect allusions to capital punishment. For example, in the Preamble, the Constitution's objectives include "To establish justice,

insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity." In Article II, section 2, the President is given the power to grant reprieves. "Reprieve" ordinarily means the withdrawal of the sentence of death. Article III, Section 3 grants Congress the power to declare the punishment for treason; the punishment then and in most jurisdictions today is death.

The Fifth Amendment, adopted simultaneously with the Eighth, contains three references to the death penalty, and the Fourteenth Amendment provides that "no State shall deprive any person of *life*, liberty or property without due process of law . . . " The Fifth Amendment is an express mandate that "no person shall be held to answer for a *capital*, or other infamous crime, unless on a presentment or indictment of the Grand Jury." (Emphasis added.) It further requires that no person "be twice put in jeopardy of *life*", nor deprived of "*life*, liberty or property without due process of law" (Emphasis added). The same general language was included in the Fourteenth Amendement and made applicable to the States thereby in 1868.

> (b) The decisions of this Court have in unbroken line upheld or assumed the constitutionality of the death penalty.

The case law development has consistently recognized the constitutionality of capital punishment for over a hundred and eighty years. Even *Furman v. Georgia*, 408 U.S. 238 (1972) does not dispute the permissibility of capital punishment *under appropriate conditions*. Of the five concurring opinions, two expressly declined to face the question of whether capital punishment was *per se* a violation of the cruel and unusual punishments clause of the Eighth Amendment. In all previous decisons of this Court, the reasoning and results have consistently assumed the permissibility of the death penalty for extreme cases, or have squarely held that the death penalty is, for certain types of cases, a permissible punishment.

The first case in which this Court considered the Constitutional prohibition against cruel and unusual punishment was *Wilkerson v. Utah*, 99 U.S. 130 (1878). There

the Court addressed the mode of execution, by shooting, and held it was not forbidden by the prohibition against cruel and unusual punishment. The opinion focused primarily on the applicability of the "cruel and unusual punishment" provision to punishments involving torture and others of unnecessary cruelty.

With the advent of electrocution as a means of carrying out the death penalty, this Court in *In Re Kemmler*, 136 U.S. 436 (1890) denied an application for a writ of habeas corpus on the basis that the Eighth Amendment did not apply to state legislation. Of current importance, however, is the comment:

> punishments are cruel if they involve torture or a lingering death; but the punishment of death is not cruel, within the meaning of that word as used in the Constitution. It implies there, something inhumane and barbarous, something more than the mere extinguishment of life.

In the early twentieth century in *Weems v. United States*, 217 U.S. 349 (1909) this Court overturned as cruel and unusual, a punishment known as "cadena temporal". It was a traditional Philippine punishment for even petty offenses that imposed fifteen years "hard and painful labor", the constant wearing of chains, loss of all civil rights, perpetual surveillance, and a severe fine. The case arose under the Phillippine Bill of Rights. The Court set the punishment aside because the punishment was strange and not native to this country, had never been an accepted punishment for crimes here, and was, by all American standards, patently harsh and disproportionate to the offense (falsification of a public document).

Following World War II in *Louisiana ex rel Francis v. Resweber*, 329 U.S. 459 (1946) the Court considered whether a second attempt at electrocution of a condemned murderer following a malfunction of equipment constituted cruel and unusual punishment. The Court there rejected the claim of unconstitutional punishment. Mr. Justice Reed in announcing the Court's opinion, concluded that modern Anglo-American law forbade the infliction of unnecessary pain in the execution of the death sentence. He noted that the prohibition against the wanton infliction of pain had come into our law from the English Bill of Rights of 1688, the identical words there

appearing in our Eighth Amendment. The due process clause of the Fourteenth Amendment would prohibit a State from executing a sentence in a cruel manner. The opinion stated: ". . . the cruelty against which the Constitution protects a convicted man is cruelty inherent in the method of punishment, not the necessary suffering involved in any method employed to extinguish life humanely," 329 U.S. at 463-64.

In 1958 this Court disapproved the punishment of a native born citizen by impositon of denationalization for one day's desertion from military duty. In that case, *Trop v. Dulles*, 356 U.S. 86 (1958), a five to four decision, the majority rejected the punishment. However, in Chief Justice Warren's plurality opinion, he pointed out that, "Since wartime desertion is punishable by death, there can be no argument that the penalty of denationalization is excessive in relation to the gravity of the crime." Recognizing that the language "cruel and unusual" was not precise, the opinion further clarified the scope of Constitutional prohibitions by noting that "fines, imprisonment and even execution may be imposed depending upon the enormity of the crime, but any technique outside the bounds of these traditional penalties is Constitutionally suspect." Of especial importance here is Chief Justice Warren's comment:

> At the outset, let us put to one side the death penalty as an index of the constitutional limit on punishment. Whatever the arguments may be on capital punishment, both on moral grounds and in terms of accomplishing the purposes of punishment–and they are forceful–the death penalty has been employed throughout our history and *in a day when it is still widely accepted, it cannot be said to violate the constitutional concept of cruelty*. 356 U.S. at 99 (Emphasis added).

The effect of the decision in *Robinson v. California*, 370 U.S. 660 (1962), was to settle that the Eighth Amendment's ban on cruel and unusual punishment, does in fact, apply to the States through the operation of the Fourteenth Amendment. There the impermissibility of punishing one for occupying the status of a narcotic addict was established.

Six year later, this Court refused to extend the *Robinson* rationale to the crime of being intoxicated in a public place. There, in *Powell v. Texas*, 392 U.S. 514 (1968), the court distinguished the "status" of drug addiction from the situation of the individual who is intoxicated in a public place.

In *Witherspoon v. Illinois*, 391 U.S. 510 (1968) the Court, in clarifying the bases upon which capital jurors may be excused, assumed the constitutional premissibility of the death penalty.

Most recently this Court in *McGautha v. California*, 402 U.S. 183 (1971) held that the absence of standards to guide a jury's discretion in determining whether to impose the death penalty did not violate due process. In a concurring opinion, Justice Black stated explicitly what appeared to have been assumed by the remaining members of the Court; that the Eighth Amendment's prohibition of cruel and unusual punishment does not outlaw capital punishment. Mr. Justice Black succinctly observed:

> The Eighth Amendment forbids 'cruel and unusual punishments.' In my view, these words cannot be read to outlaw capital punishment because that penalty was in common use and authorized by law here and in the countries from which our ancestors came at the time the Amendment was adopted. It is inconceivable to me that the framers intended to end capital punishment by the Amendment. Although some people have urged that this Court should amend the Constitution by interpretation to keep it abreast of modern ideas, I have never believed that lifetime judges in our system have any such legislative power. 402 U.S. at 226.

Since 1971, *Furman* is the only capital case to be decided on Eighth Amendment grounds. While the *per curiam* decision and the nine separate opinions can be read, digested and interpreted in a multitude of expansive and grandiose ways, it is clear that the Court did not there rule capital punishment *per se* violative of the Eighth Amendment, but determined that

the judgments in the cases then before the Court were to be set aside because of the arbitrariness involved in discretionary sentencing prerogatives vested in the judge or a jury. Respondent reads *Furman* as standing for a single and limited proposition, to wit: Where an unbridled discretion in sentencing authority exists (whether by judge or jury) to impose either a death sentence or a life sentence upon felons convicted of equal degrees of crime, then because of the manner (arbitrarily capriciously and discriminatorily) in which those having such power have applied it in the past, such discretion violated the Constitution of the United States, and those sentenced to death pursuant to such an arbitrary power could not be executed. Of the five concurring opinions only Justice Marshall declared that the death penalty violated the Eighth Amendment on the grounds that it was excessive, unnecessary and morally unacceptable. Justice Brennan reached the same conclusion, but on the basis that the punishment did not comport with human dignity; that the punishment could not be shown to serve its purpose any more effectively than a less drastic punishment; and that the punishment was not regarded by society as acceptable. Mr. Justice Douglas expressly declined to reach the question of whether a mandatory death penalty would otherwise be constitutional. Justices Stewart and White, in their opinions, noted that it was unnecessary in that case to reach the ultimate question of whether the infliction of the death penalty was constitutionally impermissible under the Eighth and Fourteenth Amendments under all circumstances.

The net result then is that of five justices who found lacking the statutory schemes condemned in *Furman*, only two would have held that capital punishment cannot be administered under any circumstances as a matter of constitutional law.

Contrary to Petitioners' urgings (Appendix 2 to *Jurek v. Texas*, No. 75-5394 (O.T. 1975) p.7, n. 13), we do not believe this explanation of the previous cases leaves the Court with "no coherent or intelligible principles of Eighth Amendment jurisprudence," but instead, we suggest that:

1. The Eighth Amendment prohibits unnecessary cruelty, beyond that which attends extinction of life in executing the

punishment, *Wilkerson v. Utah*, 99 U.S. 130 (1878), *In Re Kemmler*, 136 U.S. 43 (1890), *Louisiana ex rel. Francis v. Resweber* 329 U.S. 459 (1946).

2. Punishments may be imposed for acts committed, but not for occupying a status which society does not like, *Robinson v. California*, 370 U.S. 660 (1962), *Powell v. Texas*, 392 U.S. 514 (1968).

3. Those punishments permitted by North Carolina Constitution, Article XI, §1, traditional punishments of Anglo-American law, may be imposed if not grossly disproportionate to the enormity of the crime, *Weems v. United States*, 217 U.S. 349 (1909) *Trop v. Dulles*, 356 U.S. 86 (1958), *McGautha v. California*, 402 U.S. 183 (1971).

4. Where an unbridled, unfettered, ungoverned discretion exists in the hands of a sentencing authority, whether judge or jury, to choose between life and death for felons convicted of equal degrees of crime, then, because of the arbitrary and discriminatory method in which such sentencing discretion has been exercised by judges and juries in the past, felons so sentenced may not be executed, though the procedure itself is not constitutionally impermissible, *McGautha v. California*, 402 U.S. 183 (1971); *Furman v. Georgia*, 408 U.S. 238 (1972).

5. The doctrine of *stare decisis* and the impressive weight of precedent for one hundred eighty years, weighs heavily in support of the proposition that capital punishment is not, *per se*, an impermissible punishment by virtue of the Eighth or Fourteenth Amendments to the Constitution of the United States.

> *Stare decisis*, if it is a doctrine founded on principle, surely applies where there exists a long line of cases endorsing or necessarily assuming the validity of a particular matter of Constitutional interpretation. *Green v. United States*, 356 U.S. 165, 189-193...(Frankfurter, J. concurring).
> *Furman v. Georgia*, 408 U.S. at 428 (Powell, J. Dissenting).

As tempting as it might be to men of character, learning and strong opinions to dabble in the legislative arena, the doctrines of judicial restraint and separation of powers inherent in the very fabric of this republic require that the wisdom of decisions and the advisablility of policy as to punishments for crimes rest in legislative bodies. At bare minimum, when the punishment prescribed is neither inherently cruel nor inherently unusual in its form, nor inherently cruel and unusual and not grossly excessive as applied to the particular crime, the Court should circumspectly defer to the legislative branch.

It is apparent from the action of thirty-five state legislatures and the Congress of the United States that the death penalty, while vigorously disagreed with and copiously written against by the self proclaimed "enlightened" minority, is still widely accepted by the vast majority of the people, not only of Respondent State of North Carolina, but of the United States. Chief Justice Warren's observation of 1958 is valid today, Respondent suggests, in that the death penalty "in a day when it is still widely accepted, cannot be said to violate the constitutional concept of cruelty." *Trop v. Dulles*, 356 U.S. 86, 99.

III

THE CONSTITUTIONAL APPORTIONMENT OF POWERS AND BALANCING OF POWERS AS BETWEEN THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT AND THE STATES AND AS BETWEEN THE JUDICIARY AND THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCHES, SHOULD NOT BE ALTERED EXCEPT BY CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT.

It has been observed that John Adams saw that the federal system

> followed his basic principle to an extraordinary degree, including, as he saw it, no less than eight balances: (1) states and territories against the central government; (2) the House of Representatives against the Senate; (3) the President against Congress; (4) the Judiciary against Congress; (5) the Senate against the President in matters of appointments and treaties; (6) the people against their representatives; (7) the state legislatures against the Senate; (8) the electoral college against the people. Mason, *Free Government in the Making*, 140-141 (3rd Ed. 1965)

As Hamilton noted in *The Federalist* (No. 45), "The powers delegated by the proposed Constitution to the Federal government are few and defined." Mr. Chief Justice Marshall observed in *McCulloch v. Maryland*, 17 U.S. (4 Wheat.) 316 (1819): "This government is acknowledged by all to be one of enumerated powers....We admit, as all must admit, that the powers of the (federal) government are limited, and that its limits are not to be transcended."

Mr. Justice Story in *Martin v. Hunter's Lessee*, 14 U.S. (1 Wheat.) 383, 325 (1816), noted:

> The government, then of the United States, can claim no powers which are not granted to it by the Constitution, and the powers actually granted must be such as are expressly given, or given by necessary implication.

Aside from the limited sovereignty of the federal government, the power then lies, Respondent contends, with the people, to be utilized by the people through the states and their elected legislatures according to the intention of the Tenth Amendment to the Constitution.

This Court in *Ullman v. United States*, 350 U.S. 422, 428-429 (1956) observed:

> Nothing new can be put into the Constitution except through the amendatory process. Nothing old can be taken out without the same process . . . . To view a particular provision of the Bill of Rights with disfavor inevitably results in a constricted application of it. This is to disrespect the Constitution.

"Construction" of a statute or Constitutional provision is not required when the provisions are positive, clear and free from all ambiguity. *Wright v. United States*, 302 U.S. 583 (1938). The Fifth Amendment expressly provides "No person shall be held to answer for a capital...crime, unless on a presentment or indictment of a grand jury,...nor shall any person be subject for the same offense to be twice put in jeopardy of life..., nor be deprived of life,...without due process of law...." In the Fourteenth Amendment, the language is "...nor shall any State deprive any person of life,...without due process of law;...."

There is no need to search for meanings beyond the Constitution, *United States v. Sprague*, 282 U.S. 716 (1931) and the Court should not, by resort to sophistication, attempt to restrict an obvious meaning. *Maxwell v. Dow*, 176 U.S. 581 (1900).

In *United States v. Sprague, supra*, 282 U.S. at 731, the Court observed:

> The Constitution was written to be understood by the voters; its words and phrases were used in their normal and ordinary, as distinguished from technical,meaning; when the intention is clear, there is no room for construction and no excuse for interpolation or addition.

The terminology "capital punishment" carries with it the same meaning today that it carried with it at the time the Framers prepared the Constitution and the Bill of Rights – punishment by death of the criminal.[4]

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4 "capital crime, such a one as subjects the criminal to capital punishment, that is, the loss of life." II

While the spirit of the Constitution is to be respected no less than its letter, that spirit is to be collected from its words, and neither practice nor extrinsic circumstances can control its clear language. *Sturges v. Crowninshield*, 17 U.S. (4 Wheat.) 122 (1819).

The Constitution is to be construed in light of its purpose and given a practical interpretation. *Smiley v. Holm*, 285 U.S. 355 (1932). As Mr. Justice Douglas put it, "The Constitution is concerned with practical, substantial rights, not with those that are unclear and gain hold by subtle and involved reasoning." *Federal Housing Administration v. Darlington, Inc.*, 358 U.S. 84 (1958).

In *United States v. Classic*, 313 U.S. 299, 316 (1941), the Court said,

> Thence we read (the Constitution's) words, not as we read legislative codes, which are subject to continuous revision with the changing course of events, but as the revelation of the great purposes which were intended to be achieved by the Constitution as a continuing instrument of government.

It is important to note at this point that while protection from the tyranny of government was one of the purposes of

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4(continued)

> ENCYCLOPAEDIA BRITANNICA; or, A DICTIONARY OF ARTS AND SCIENCES, 1st Ed. (1771)
>
> "Capital punishment is the execution of a criminal pursuant to a sentence of death imposed by a competent court." IV ENCYCLOPAEDIA BRITANNICA (1969 Ed.).
>
> "capital, adj. . . . 14. involving the loss of life: *capital punishment.* 15. punishable by death: *a capital crime; a capital offender.*" THE RANDOM HOUSE DICTIONARY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE, Unabridged Ed. 219 (1966)

the people in establishment of a government of stated, limited and defined powers through a written Constitution, it was not and is not the only purpose. The Preamble to the Constitution lists purposes including "...To insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity...."

The Constitution, thus, was prepared and accepted to provide for checks and balances within the government and internal safeguards against tyranny by government in providing for the people a government with the means to apprehend, arrest, try and punish those criminals who would terrorize the community or criminally deprive a citizen of life, liberty or the pursuit of happiness. This Court has referred to the Preamble as evidence of the origin, scope and purpose of the Constitution. *McCulloch v. Maryland,* 17 U.S. (4 Wheat.) 316, 403 (1819); *Chisholm v. Georgia,* 2 U.S. (2 Dall.) 419, 470-471 (1793); *Martin v. Hunter's Lessee,* 14 U.S. (1 Wheat.) 304 (1816).

Concerning the Preamble, Alexander Hamilton observed in *The Continentalist* in 1781:

> In a government framed for durable liberty, not less regard must be paid to giving the magistrate a proper degree of authority to make and execute the laws with rigor, than to guard against encroachment upon the right of the community. As too much power leads to despotism, too little leads to anarchy, and both, eventually, to the ruin of the people. Quoted in Mason, *Free Government in the Making* 154 (3rd Ed. 1965).

A reading of the Constitution as it was written and adopted by the original states, including the Bill of Rights, can lead only to the conclusion that at that time, the punishment of death was a permissible punishment contemplated by the framers of the Constitution. A review of the cases and decisions by this Court over the last two hundred years discloses *no* precedent upon which to base a conclusion that capital punishment is *per se* an impermissible punishment under that Constitution.

It is a well settled doctrine of constitutional law that the burden of proof is on the one who challenges the constitutionality of a statute and that in the absence of a clear showing of unconstitutionality, a state statute will be presumed valid. *McGowan v. Maryland,* 366 U.S. 420, 425-26 (1961). That is not to suggest that under no circumstances could the validity of legislatively authorized punishments be challenged, but Respondent contends that the proper standard for judicial review is that set out by Chief Justice Burger, dissenting in *Furman, supra,* 408 U.S. at 384:

> I do not suggest that the validity of legislatively authorized punishments presents no justiciable issue under the Eighth Amendment, but rather that the primacy of the legislative role narrowly confines the scope of judicial inquiry whether or not proveable, and whether or not true at all times, in a democracy the legislative judgment is presumed to embody the basic standards of decency prevailing in society. This presumption can only be negated by unambiguous and compelling evidence of legislative default.

Contrary to any legislative default, there has been apparent legislative activity to enact or re-enact some form of capital punishment on the part of thirty-five states and the Congress of the United States in the brief period since the decision of this Court in *Furman.* The issue before this Court is not the wisdom or social desirability of capital punishment; those questions are addressed appropriately to the legislative branch. Justice Exum's concurring opinion in the North Carolina Supreme Court in this case is an eloquent statement of one troubled by the wisdom of capital punishment but acknowledging legislative supremacy in matters of fixing punishments. After all, the Court's

> function is not to impose on the State, *ex cathedra,* what might seem to us a better system for dealing with capital cases. Rather, it is to decide whether the Federal Constitution proscribes the present procedures...in such cases.

McGautha v. California, 402 U.S. 183, 195-96 (Mr. Justice Harlan).

The "ordeal of judgment" (Pet. *Fowler* Reply Brief, Appendix 2 to Petitioner's Brief in *Jurek v. Texas*, at 3) to which the Petitioner would subject this Court is an illusion. Petitioners magnify the problems of whether, when, and under what circumstances a mature and progressive society should choose to assume responsibility for putting its heinous criminals to death. Petitioners assert, in effect, that it is so difficult that we can only solve the problem by defining it away. Respondent's solution is not so simplistic. But Respondent asserts its willingness to assume its constitutional responsibility for choosing who must be executed for what crimes and in what manner.

Those who decry the imposition of capital punishment first urge that modern society is revulsed by the prospect of the death penalty being imposed. The fact of re-enactment since *Furman* by so many of the states' legislatures and by the Congress refutes that notion. In California by constitutional initiative an amendment was passed by a 65% majority restoring capital punishment after challenge in the State's courts. Its passage testifies to the weakness of the charge of public unacceptability. In 107 cases North Carolina juries, though aware of the mandatory death penalty consequences of a guilty verdict, have not shirked their duty where they were convinced beyond a reasonable doubt of guilt.

A second basis on which opponents of capital punishment rest is a somewhat anti-democratic, autocratic posture: if the people only knew and understood, they would oppose capital punishment. In a democracy it is the people who govern, and while their information and education is sometimes imperfect, it is the will of the people and not the preference of a handful, which determines the standards of decency of our state and nation.

The Supreme Court of North Carolina, although divided in *State v. Waddell*, on the issue of statutory interpretation in the light of *Furman*, was unanimous that capital punishment and its imposition is constitutional under the Constitution of North Carolina and the Constitution of the United States. *State*

v. Waddell, 282 N.C. 431, 435, 194 S.E.2d 19, 22-23. In dissenting opinions in *Waddell*, Chief Justice Bobbitt and Justice Sharp (now Chief Justice) made it clear that "...There are no constitutional infirmities in capital punishment *per se*...", *Waddell, supra*, 282 N.C. at 476, 194 S.E. 2d at 47.

In Petitioners' case Chief Justice Sharp, writing for a unanimous Court, noted that the dissents in *Waddell* and companion cases

> were not based upon the premise that the death sentence constituted cruel and unusual punishment or that there were any constitutional infirmities in capital punishment *per se*.

State v. Woodson, 287 N.C. at 591-592. Justice Exum in his separate opinion, noted that

> ...as a judge, I cannot substitute my personal will for that of the legislature merely because I disagree with its chosen policy.

Woodson, supra, 287 N.C. at 600, 215 S.E.2d at 621.

In *Furman* it is made clear that were this Court invested with absolute legislative power, some would legislate the abolition of the death penalty. Respondent concedes that the Court, in an unreviewable assertion of its power, could abolish the death penalty. But Respondent urges that the decision whether to abolish, is indeed a legislative judgment, a judgment which, in light of the plain language of the Constitution can be made only by the people acting through their elected legislatures.

The Petitioners themselves, in their appeal to the history of the ban they seek to invoke, have aptly described the role they blatantly ask this Court to assume (Petitioner's *Fowler* brief at 28):

> The preamble to the Bill of Rights (of 1688) declared that James II had endeavored to "subvert" the "laws and liberties of the kingdom" by arbitrarily "assuming and exercising a power of dispensing with and suspending of laws and the execution of laws, *without the consent of parliament.* (Emphasis added).

For the Court to abolish the death penalty in the teeth of the Constitutional text is for the Court to assume the role of a super legislature – a role which ill-becomes the Court and ill-serves the Republic.

IV

ELECTED STATE LEGISLATURES MAY CONSTITUTIONALLY SELECT ANY PUNISHMENT WHICH SERVES LEGITIMATE PURPOSES AND IS ACCEPTABLE TO CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY.

The General Assembly of North Carolina, in its wisdom and through the legislative process, has reached a judgment that there is social value from the imposition of capital punishment.

After extensive debates over a period of several years in which efforts to amend, repeal or modify the death penalty in each legislative session met with varying successes and failures, the General Assembly in 1974 provided that murder in the first degree as described by statute "...shall be punished with death."

Petitioners contend that the legitimate functions of punishment must be geared toward five related but separable objectives, i. e., reformation and rehabilitation, moral reinforcement or reprobation, isolation or specific deterrence, retribution, and deterrence. As in our *Fowler* Brief, we generally agree. Yet, contrary to Petitioners' posture, we urge strongly that capital punishment does fulfill and reinforce vital social values which are essential to the Republic and to her citizens' confidence in government.

By providing for the death penalty, the General Assembly found that capital punishment acts as moral reinforcement or reprobation by exemplar to others; that it is the final and complete isolation of the offender in those severe cases in which the security of the people requires it; that the death penalty satisfies a pressing need for social retribution; that thereby the State demonstrates to the people its willingness to shoulder its responsibility with respect to the worsening problem of armed robberies and related murders in cold blood; and that

the death penalty, if imposed, would act as a deterrent to those who might otherwise be tempted to commit the heinous crime of first degree murder.

> (a) The death penalty has been determined, in the judgment of the General Assembly of North Carolina, to have a substantial deterrent effect.

The judgment of the General Assembly of North Carolina that capital punishment more nearly achieves the permissible goals of criminal justice than would life imprisonment is certainly not an irrational judgement nor is it inconsistent with the legitimate and constitutionally permissible aims it attempts to achieve. The determination and enactment of the best method is a legislative decision and not a judicial choice. Despite the numerous law reviews, sociological reports and statistics cited by the Petitioners purporting to show that the death penalty is no deterrent to the commission of capital crimes, Petitioners finally concede that these are not proof, but opinions, albeit in Petitioner's eye, expert. The North Carolina Supreme Court has said, and wisely Respondent urges, that: "What constitutes cruel or unusual punishment...is not subject to expert (or other) opinion evidence." *State v. Rogers*, 275 N.C. 411, 168 S.E.2d 245 (1969).

The value of statistics and merit of statistical theories are, like the beauty of a child, most obvious to the parent. The opinions of respected persons active in the field of criminal justice are, nevertheless, worthwhile to indicate at the least a strong divergence of opinion from Petitioners' conclusion. In 1974 the Honorable Ben R. Miller, then Chairman of the American Bar Association Section of Criminal Justice, observed that:

> Contrary to many assertions that the possibility of apprehension, conviction and infliction of a death penalty cannot be 'proven' to be a stong deterrent, I submit that the F.B.I. Uniform Crime Reports for the years since 1960 conclusively substantiate the death penalty as a deterrent. There were 56 executions in 1960, 42 in 1961 and 47 in 1962. In 1963...there were but 21. Between 1963 and 1967, murder

> increased a dramatic 32%. In the same period, aggravated assault jumped over 43% and forcible rape 48%...
>
> In fact, the last execution was in 1967. In the ensuing five year period, the rate for murder jumped 46%, aggravated assault 45%, and forcible rape 62%. To one who has practiced law over forty-five years, these statistics were not necessary to establish that the death penalty for forcible rape was a very strong deterrent to the commission of that crime.
>
> Criminal Justice Bulletin, Volume 2, No. 3, Fall 1974, at 3.

Respondent shows that in North Carolina in 1974, the first year in which death penalty sentences became widely known in North Carolina, *murders decreased* by 37 or 5.87% (from 630 in 1973 to 593 in 1974); *rapes decreased* by 32 or 3.98% (from 805 in 1973 to 773 in 1974); while nationwide murder increased by 6% and rapes by 8%. Crime in North Carolina, N.C. Police Information Network Uniform Crime Reports, 1974.

Of equally scientific orientation, is the study of Professor Ehrlich originally appended to the *amicus* brief of the Solicitor General in *Fowler v. North Carolina* and subsequently printed in 65 American Economic Review 397 (1975). While Respondent does not adopt or defend all of the premises upon which Professor Ehrlich's formulae and conclusions rest, his conclusions as a sociological statistician are of equal or perhaps greater strength than those of others active in the field. Generally his conclusion as to the efficacy of the *imposition* of capital punishment as a deterrent was that for each execution actually carried out, approximately eight murders are deterred or prevented. If Professor Ehrlich's conclusions are at all credible, the deterrent value is a substantial one. For each killer actually executed, he concludes that the murder of eight innocent law-abiding victims were deterred.

The correlation between spiraling violent crime rates and the absence of an effective capital punishment, i. e., no

imposition of capital punishment in North Carolina since 1961, coupled with the statistical studies of Professor Ehrlich, presents a valid basis upon which the General Assembly made its rational decision to mandate capital punishment by statute.

> (b) The General Assembly has determined that imposition of the death penalty for the most serious of homicides, first degree murder, serves a useful social purpose as an expression of society's revulsion and as a proper channeling of retributive reaction.

The legislative judgment of the General Assembly was no doubt based upon the need for the State to express its outrage at the terrible crimes of first degree murder and to thereby express the retribution which every individual victim would feel.

Some writers have challenged retribution as a proper basis on which to base a penal statute. Respondent differs and urges that retribution is a constitutionally permissible basis for capital punishment. In the words of Mr. Justice Stewart in his concurring opinion in *Furman v. Georgia, supra,* 408 U.S. at 308:

> On that score I would say only that I cannot agree that retribution is a constitutionally impermissible ingredient in the imposition of punishment. The instinct for retribution is part of the nature of man and channeling that instinct in the administration of criminal justice serves an important purpose in promoting the stability of a society governed by law. When people begin to believe that organized society is unwilling or unable to impose upon criminal offenders the punishment they 'deserve', then there are sown the seeds of anarchy – of self help, vigilante justice and lynch law.

The thread which ties obedience to government, co-operation with government and indeed, the consent of the governed is worn exceedingly thin by a building feeling of frustration. This helpless feeling is individually and socially

exacerbated by the fact that vicious, cold-blooded criminals who have been tried in the courts of our state under the fairest of circumstances, convicted by a jury permitted to hear only admissible evidence, and required to reach a verdict unanimously, are properly sentenced to suffer death for their heinous crimes, but they continue to evade their justly deserved punishment. This frustration is heightened when the sentences of vicious defendants, tried and convicted under the same types of circumstances, still cannot be carried out. As Justice Lake in *State v. Jarrette, supra,* 284 N.C. at 664, points out:

> The reasonable certainty or even likelihood of a punishment commensurate with the offense, imposed by the state is more likely to deter private effort by the family and friends of the victim to 'balance the account,' than is a policy of correction designed to release the offender in society as soon as possible.

It is important to note that, as England's Lord Justice Denning said:

> The punishment inflicted for grave crimes should adequately reflect the revulsion felt by the great majority of citizens for them. It is a mistake to consider the objectives of punishment as being deterrent or reformative or preventive and nothing else....The ultimate justification of any punishment...that it is the emphatic denunciation by the community of a crime; and...there are some murders which...demand the most emphatic denunciation of all, namely, the death penalty.
>
> *National Commission on Reform of Federal Criminal Laws,* two working papers, 1359 (n. 47) (1970).

(c) The goal of specific deterrence or isolation, though permanent, is a permissible punishment goal and is well served by capital punishment for first degree murder.

As to isolation of the offender, suffice it to say, that imposition of capital punishment for these types of crimes will

effectively isolate the offender from the society he has so brutually and senselessly victimized. Though permanent and irreversible, such isolation is society's appropriate response to the perpetrator of cold-blooded killings such as Petitioners perpetrated in the course of this robbery.

(d) The legislative definition of first degree murder to include murders committed in the perpetration of certain felonies is not constitutionally impermissible.

N.C. Gen. Stat. §14-17 includes within "first degree murder" those murders committed with premeditation and deliberation and those committed "in the perpetration or attempt to perpetrate any arson, rape, robbery, kidnapping, burglary or other felony." "Or other felony" has been defined by our court to include felonies "inherently dangerous to life", *State v. Woods,* 286 N.C. 612, 213 S.E. 2d 214 (1975) as well as any felony "the commission or attempted commission (of which) creates any substantial foreseeable human risk and actually results in the loss of life", *State v. Thompson,* 280 N.C. 202, 185 S.E. 2d 666 (1972).

Here the petitioners were part of a planned conspiracy to carry out an armed robbery, and in the course of the armed robbery the lone witness was needlessly murdered. In such a case our law is clear that each and all conspirators to such a robbery are equally guilty of murder in the first degree. *State v. Fox,* 277 N.C. 1, 175 S.E.2d 561 (1970); *State v. Hairston,* 280 N.C. 220, 185 S.E.2d 633 (1972); *State v. Wright,* 282 N.C. 364, 192 S.E.2d 818 (1972).

While Waxton was the trigger man in the robbery-murder Woodson was charged as an aider and abettor. In North Carolina one who assists another in the commission of a crime is an aider and abettor, *State v. Benton,* 276 N.C. 641, 174 S.E.2d 793 (1970), and is equally guilty with the principal. Our Court has defined "aider and abettor" in *State v. Price,* 280 N.C. 154, 184 S.E.2d 866 (1971) as follows:

> ...One who procures or commands another to commit a felony, accompanies the actual perpetrator to the vicinity of the offense and,

> with the knowledge of the actual perpetrator, remains in that vicinity for the purpose of aiding and abetting in the offense and sufficiently close to the scene of the offense to render aid in its commission, if needed, or to provide a means by which the actual perpetrator may get away from the scene upon the completion of the offense, is a principal in the second degree and equally liable with the actual perpetrator....

In *State v. Hargett*, 255 N.C. 412, 121 S.E.2d 589 (1961), the definition is stated:

> '...A person aids when, being present at the time and place, he does some act to render aid to the actual perpetrator of the crime though he takes no direct share in its commission; and an abettor is one who gives aid and comfort, or either commands, advises, instigates or encourages another to commit a crime.' *State v. Holland*, 234 N.C. 354, 358, 67 S.E.2d 272; *State v. Johnson*, 220 N.C. 773, 776, 18 S.E.2d 358.

Here, there was evidence tending to show that the Petitioner Woodson:

1) Took part in the planning of the robbery, (R. 91);

2) Test-fired the rifle and had it in his possession in the car outside the store while the robbery-murder was in progress, (R. 45);

3) Fled the scene of the crime after hearing two gunshots, picking up Tucker and Waxton, who were carrying a cash register tray and dollar bills in their hands, (R. 45);

4) Shared equally in the proceeds of the robbery (R. 93); and,

5) Fled the State with Waxton to avoid apprehension (R. 91).

All who are present at the place of a crime and are either aiding, abetting, assisting, or advising in its commission, or are present for that purpose to the knowledge of the actual perpetrator, are principals and equally guilty. *State v. Dawson*, 281 N.C. 645, 190 S.E.2d 196 (1972); *State v. Benton*, 276 N.C. 641, 174 S.E.2d 793 (1970). However, under the felony murder rule, the underlying felony which elevates the murder to first degree murder is merged into the first degree murder offense, *State v. Williams*, 284 N.C. 67, 199 S.E. 2d 409 (1973).

Though not in issue here, an "accidential" killing which *results from* a felony in which there was a *"substantial foreseeable human risk"* has been held in one recent case, *State v. Thompson*, 280 N.C. 202, 185 S.E.2d 666 (1972), to be first degree murder, even though, in that case, there was scant evidence of accidental homicide. In *Thompson, supra*, after the defendant had said he had "somebody upstairs...to take care of", he then shot the victim at close range, *as in the instant case*, in the back of the head.

> An interrelationship between the felony and the homicide is prerequisite to the application of the felony-murder doctrine. 40 C.J.S. Homicide §21(b), at 870; Perkins, op. cit. at 35. A killing is committed in the perpetration or attempted perpetration of a felony within the purview of a felony-murder statute "when there is no break in the chain of events leading from the initial felony to the act causing death, so that the homicide is linked to or part of the series of incidents, forming one continuous transaction." 40 Am. Jur. 2d Homicide §73, at 367; see 51 Dickinson Law Review 12, 18-19 (1946). Robbery cases bearing on this point are *Campbell v. State*, 227 So. 2d 873, 878 (Fla. 1969); *State v. Glenn*, 429 S.W. 2d 225, 231 (Mo. 1968); *Jones v. State*, 220 Ga. 899, 142 S.E. 2d 801 (1965); *Commonwealth v. Dellelo*, 349 Mass. 525, 529-31, 209 N.E. 2d 303, 306-07 (1965); *People v. Mitchell*, 61 Cal. 2d 353, 360-62, 38 Cal. Rptr. 726, 731, 392 P. 2d 526, 531-32 (1964).
> *State v. Thompson, supra*, 280 N.C. at 212.

Petitioners criticize the felony-murder rule as contradictory and unpredictable (Petitioners' Brief at 34), citing the *Carey* cases. Petitioners opine that the fates of Albert and Anthony Carey, Dorsey, Givens and Mitchell are "utterly mystifying" (Pet. Brief 40) and that Albert Carey's death sentence is cruel and unusual. Respondent shows unto the Court the answer to the "mystery". The Carey brothers and one Dorsey instigated, planned and engineered a series of armed robberies in which they obtained a fifteen year old youth, "Peanut" Mitchell, and Harold Givens, to actually go in and carry out the armed robberies. In the course of one of these a victim was murdered. Evidence against Mitchell was by an eyewitness, a fingerprint at the scene and a confession. The State had insufficient evidence to try and convict the Carey brothers, Givens and Dorsey; but for the testimony of Mitchell, Givens, the Careys and Dorsey would go free. In light of these facts, the District Attorney made a plea bargain with Mitchell. In the plea bargain Mitchell was sentenced to thirty years imprisonment for second degree murder and agreed to testify for the State against the Careys.

At trial he testified against Anthony Carey, who was convicted. After being confined with the Careys, Mitchell repudiated his testimony in the trial of Givens, and the State was non-suited. He reaffirmed his original testimony in the first trial of Albert Carey who was convicted. The two *Carey* cases were reversed by the Supreme Court of North Carolina. In the interim, Mitchell was confined in the North Carolina Department of Corrections, and while there decided to refuse to cooperate in either Carey case or against Dorsey.

In the second trial of Anthony Carey, Mitchell again repudiated his testimony, but was called and examined at length as a hostile witness by the State. As a result, Albert Carey was convicted at the December 16, 1974 term of Superior Court. As result of Mitchell's refusal to testify, the charges against Anthony Carey and Antonio Dorsey were dismissed by the District Attorney on December 19, 1974. The Supreme Court of North Carolina affirmed the result of the second trial on October 7, 1975. See *State v. Albert Carey*, 288 N.C. 254, _____ S.E. 2d _____ (1975). Respondent submits that Albert Carey's fate was no more mysterious than the fates of others who are caught and convicted, while their colleagues in crime go unapprehended.

Respondent contends that the felony-murder rule results are quite predictable. When the State has insufficient credible evidence to prove offenses beyond a reasonable doubt, there are no convictions regardless of the apparent crime. Likewise, it is altogether predictable and foreseeable that someone will be killed, or at least injured when robberies are carried out by armed persons. The presence of a deadly weapon in the hands of one defendant carrying out an armed robbery gives ample warning to his co-defendants that an innocent victim is likely to be killed. In the instant case the killing was not the result of resistance or non-compliance of the victim, but was in the nature of a witness execution by a single shot into the head at close range (R. 44).

Respondent sees no constitutional flaw in this statutory rule of substantive criminal law. As Petitioners say in their brief, the difference between a premeditated first degree murder and a felony-murder first degree murder is "of no constitutional significance" (Pet. Brief at 30).

V

THE EXERCISE OF HUMAN JUDGEMENTS, IN GOOD FAITH, PURSUANT TO THE OBLIGATIONS OF THE CONSTITUTION, STATUTES AND OATHS OF OFFICE BY PROSECUTORS, JURORS, JUDGES AND THE GOVERNOR ARE NOT VIOLATIVE OF THE EIGHTH AMENDMENT.

It is important to recognize that all of the exercises of judgment complained of by Petitioners are required by the Constitution of the United States or the Constitution of North Carolina or by statutes and oaths of office taken by the officers complained of. None are innovations; none have the effect of diminishing the myriad rights of the accused–indeed, each exercise of judgment can only operate, if at all, to benefit an individual defendant.

Petitioners ask rhetorically (Pet. Brief at 54) whose judgment says that these two petitioners should be executed, and then profess that there is no answer. On the contrary, Respondent says that there clearly is an answer. The judgments of the General Assembly of North Carolina, representatively

and responsively elected, a duly constituted Grand Jury of defendants' peers, a skilled, vigorous and effective prosecutor, a fairly chosen representative petit jury, a well educated and circumspect trial judge, and the unanimous judgment of the North Carolina Supreme Court acting to effect enforcement of a specific grant of legislative power to impose the death penalty for certain heinous crimes, Article XI, § § 1 and 2, North Carolina Constitution. Actually petitioners' complaint is not that they do not know whose judgment is responsible but that they disagree with the decisions made by these public authorities. The fact that this disagreement may exist and be joined in by an appreciable segment of society raises no constitutional infirmity.

The exercise of this type of judgment is required if our present system of criminal justice is to survive. Petitioners know that and in answer urge that capital punishment is somehow different, constitutionally requiring an absolutely judgment-free guilt determination process. Such a judgment-free system is alien to our jury system and is neither constitutionally required nor possible where mere mortals are charged with dispensing justice. The protections of the due process clause of the Fourteenth Amendment apply with equal force to deprivations of life and deprivations of liberty. There is no basis in constitutional law for assuming the necessity for a different system of justice to meet due process requirements as to "life" from that necessary for the due process protections for "liberty".

None of the exercises of judgment complained of occur after the verdict, except for the Governor's executive clemency power to "pardon, commute or reprieve". None of the actions complained of affect sentencing as such, and all are simply a human judgment as to whether a certain crime, first degree murder, as described by our statutes has in fact been committed, and whether, with admissible evidence, the State can prove beyond a reasonable doubt the commission of that crime to a jury.

As emphasized in Respondent's *Fowler* brief at 38, there is a material difference between the judgments of public officials doing their constitutional duties and the free-wheeling discretion which Petitioner seeks to impute to Respondent's

officials. (Respondent's *Fowler* Brief, p. 38, nn. 50 and 51).

> (a) The prosecutor, in evaluating his cases and his chances of conviction success, and in plea bargaining to strengthen his changes of conviction, is acting consistently with his constitutional duty and his oath of office.

For the criminal to ever be prosecuted, charging decisions must be made by someone. In our system the elected District Attorney (solicitor) has that responsibility. His constitutional duty is to "be responsible for the prosecution of all criminal actions in the Superior Courts of (his) district," North Carolina Constitution Article IV, §18(1). His oath of office requires that he "in the execution of his office, endeavor to have the criminal laws fairly and impartially administered, so far as in (him) lies, according to the best of (his) knowledge and ability . . . ." N.C. Gen. Stat. §11-11. The District Attorney has been spoken of as "the right arm" of the court, *State v. McAfee*, 189 N.C. 320, 127 S.E. 204 (1925). In taking office the District Attorney must also take an oath to uphold the Constitution of the United States as well as the Constitution of North Carolina before entering upon his duties. It is a criminal offense for him to wilfully or intentionally neglect to perform the duties of his office according to law, N.C. Gen. Stat. §14-230. Further, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, the acts of public officers are presumed to have been properly performed. *Lewis v. United States*, 279 U.S. 63 (1929). A District Attorney, then, is presumed to have exercised his judgment in good faith, and to have discharged his duty according to law. *United States v. Gleason*, 265 F. Supp. 880 (S.D. N.Y. 1967).

The District Attorney has a duty then to prosecute those whom he, in good faith, believes to be guilty and whom he believes can be convicted on the available evidence. He is responsible for criminal prosecutions, and has the burden of declining to charge a citizen unless he legitimately believes the individual is guilty of the offense charged and can be convicted.

He does his duty in good faith, relying on his knowledge of the law, his education, training and experience as a lawyer and prosecutor. His decision comes as a result of a solemn but

human evaluation which cannot be eliminated from the criminal justice process. *State v. Jarrette*, 284 N.C. 625, 202 S.E.2d 721 (1974).

The reviewability of the prosecutor's discretion has been recently recognized, *United States v. Falk*, 479 F.2d 616 (7th Cir. 1973). His abuse of discretion is potentially subject to judicial remedy. *Comment*, 9 Harv. Civ. Rights-Civ. Lib. Rev. 372, 395-7 (1974).

Part and parcel of the District Attorney's evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of his charging options is the necessity to face situations in which he has several co-defendants, equally guilty as a matter of law, but has insufficient evidence to convict any. In that case he is permitted, and, perhaps, required by the exigency of the situation to exercise his best judgment consistent with his oath of office and constitutional responsibilities to plea bargain with the lesser criminal in order to obtain evidence sufficient to convict the prime mover in the crime. Respondent submits that nothing in the case law or statutes of North Carolina, or in the Eighth or Fourteenth Amendments require a District Attorney to sit idly by while all or all but one of a group of equally guilty murderers go unconvicted, when he can, by means of a plea bargain with one defendant, obtain sufficient credible evidence upon which to convict all the others.

The prosecutor's practice of striking a bargain with a lesser culprit in order to obtain otherwise unobtainable, but vital evidence for the conviction of a greater culprit is an essential part of the prosecutor's function. It is a function well respected by those familiar with the problems of prosecuting and convicting cases involving multiple defendants and murdered witnesses. The American Bar Association's Minimum Standards for the Administration of Justice approve such practice, *A.B.A. Standards Relating to the Administration of Criminal Justice*, "Pleas of guilty", §1.8 (a)(v).

This is precisely what happened in Petitioners' cases, though they stand on somewhat different footings. The difference in the Petitioners' separate factual situations has been somewhat blurred in the copious representations in their behalf. Only petitioner Waxton, who was the prime mover and trigger

man, sought to enter a plea of guilty to lesser offenses at the close of the State's evidence.

Petitioner Woodson's attorney apparently had entered into pretrial plea negotiations and had indicated to the District Attorney that he would make pleading recommendations to his client, Woodson (R. 70-71). Woodson consistently declined to enter or tender any plea to any charge and elected, as was his constitutional privilege, to be tried by a jury on the charges of which he was accused.

Petitioner Waxton, on the other hand, did attempt to tender a plea to the lesser offenses of armed robbery and accessory after the fact to murder after the State had rested its case and he could perceive the depth of his difficulties. Waxton's offer was only to plead to the lesser offense which Tucker, a State's witness, had been permitted to plead to, but nothing more. The evidence appears to indicate that Tucker was not armed, but that only Waxton, who had a pistol, and Woodson, who had a rifle outside, were actually carrying deadly weapons.

Respondent does not dispute the legal premise that under the felony murder rule all four were equally guilty, as Petitioners suggest, as a matter of law. *State v. Bush*, 287 N.C. 159, _____ S.E.2d_____(1976).

Petitioners appear to contend that it was fundamentally unfair to permit the two unarmed, younger and less criminally experienced co-defendants to plead to lesser charges in exchange for their vital testimony against petitioners Woodson and Waxton. As Chief Justice Sharp points out in the opinion below, 287 N.C. at 593 215 S.E.2d at 616:

> From the earliest times, it has been found necessary for the detection and punishment of crime, for the State to resort to the criminals themselves for testimony with which to convict their confederates in crime. While such a course offers a premium to treachery, and sometimes permits the more guilty to escape, it tends to prevent and break up combinations, by making criminals suspicious of each other, and it often

leads to the punishment of guilty persons who would otherwise escape. Therefore, on the ground of public policy it has been uniformly held that a state may contract with the criminal for his exemption from prosecution if he shall honestly and fairly make a full disclosure of the crime, whether the party testified against is convicted or not. (Citations omitted) . . .

In many states the prosecuting attorney has no authority without the Court's consent, to make a binding agreement with one charged with a crime that if he will testify against others he himself shall be exempt from criminal liability or be allowed to plead guilty to a lesser offense. 'In states in which a prosecuting attorney may enter a *nolle prosequi* without the consent of the court, he may grant a witness immunity from prosecution by contract without approval of the court.' . . . (Citations omitted) . . . The courts treat such promises as pledges of the public faith and, when made by the public prosecutor, the court will see that the public faith which has been pledged by him is kept.

In North Carolina, the District Attorney, or Solicitor as he was known, is a Constitutional officer authorized and empowered to represent the State. He acted fully within his authority under state law when he entered the agreement which he made with Tucker and Carroll for truthful testimony. Our courts have approved plea bargaining as an essential part of our system of criminal justice. *Santobello v. New York*, 404 U.S. 257, 260 (1971).

In Mr. Justice White's opinion in *Brady v. United States*, 397 U.S. 742 (1970), this Court noted that: "We cannot hold that it is unconstitutional for the state to extend the benefit to a defendant who in turn extends a substantial benefit to the state . . . ." Likewise our court held that there is no merit to a defendant's claim of denial of due process because the District Attorney had the absolute authority to charge and prosecute for a capital offense, or to bring an accused to trial upon a lesser offense, *State v. Bush, supra.*, 289 N.C. at 165, ____S.E.2d____ (1976).

In the analagous area of sentence concessions, Mr. Justice Roberts noted for the Court in *Lisenba v. California*, 314 U.S. 219, 227 (1941) that

> the practice of taking into consideration, in sentencing an accomplice, his aid to the state in turning state's evidence can be no denial of due process to a convicted confederate.

In 1967 the Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit in *Newman v. United States*, 382 F.2d 479 (1967), faced the question of whether there was a denial of an appellant's Constitutional rights when, in a non-capital case, the United States Attorney agreed to accept a guilty plea tendered by an appellant co-defendant for a lesser included offense while refusing to accept the same plea from the appellant. Chief Justice Burger, then a Circuit Judge, pointed out that the United States Attorney has an obligation for the faithful execution of the laws and prosecution of offenses against the United States – an obligation, Respondent suggests, similar to the Constitutional and statutory burden imposed upon the elected state District Attorney in the instant case.

> To say that the United States Attorney must literally treat every offense and every offender alike is to delegate (to) him an impossible task; of course this concept would negate discretion. Myriad factors can enter into the prosecutor's decision. Two persons may have committed what is precisely the same legal offense but the prosecutor is not compelled by law, duty, or tradition to treat them the same as to charges. On the contrary, he is expected to exercise discretion and common sense to the end that if, for example, one is a young first offender and the other old, with a criminal record, or one played a lesser and the other a dominant role, one the instigator and the other a follower, the prosecutor can and should take such factors into account; no court has any discretion to inquire into or review his decision. *Newman v. United States, supra.*, 382 F. 2d at 481-482.

This Court has held that mere selectivity in prosecution creates no Constitutional problems, *Oyler v. Boles*, 368 U.S. 448, 456 (1962). To invoke as a defense the denial of due process under the Fourteenth Amendment one must prove that the selection was "deliberately based on an unjustifiable standard, such as race, religion, or other arbitrary classification," *United States v. Steel*, 461 F.2d 1148, 1151 (9th Cir. 1972).

As pointed out by Chief Justice Sharp below, Petitioner Waxton had none of the traditionally accepted mitigating factors lessening the extent or nature of his participation. The evidence discloses that he was the moving party, the oldest of the defendants, the most experienced participant and the perpetrator of the killing. Brutally and without provocation, he fired the shots which killed Mrs. Butler. He also wounded Mr. Stancil.

Petitioner Woodson at no time tendered a plea and cannot then complain that his plea was not accepted. He apparently contended that he was innocent, under the theory that his actions had been under the duress and coercion of the Petitioner Waxton. The trial judge instructed the jury on coercion as an excuse for crime (R. 138-139). Had the jury believed that he had, in fact, been coerced or that he was acting under duress, they would have acquitted him.

> (b) The judgment exercised by jurors individually and collectively in a criminal case is permissible and required by the Constitution.

Respondent submits that much of what petitioners complain about is inherent in the Anglo-American system of criminal justice as it has developed to protect the rights of accused persons.

The right to a jury trial is guaranteed to every accused person. Article I, §24, Constitution of North Carolina guarantees the right of jury trial to all criminal defendants and requires unanimous jury verdicts. The Sixth Amendment further guarantees the right to jury trial in state courts, *Duncan v. Louisiana*, 391 U.S. 145 (1968).

The phenomenon of jury nullification has been recognized since the colonial days of America as a deterrent against the arbitrary exercise of judicial power. IV Pound, JURISPRUDENCE §§ 115-116 (1959).

> The phenonenon survives *not as an act of discretion*, but as a call of high conscience . . . an act in contravention of the established instructions. This requirement of independent jury conception confines the happening of the lawless jury to the *occasional instance* that does not violate, and viewed as an exception, may even enhance the overall normative effect of the rule of law. *United States v. Dougherty*, 473 F.2d 1113, 1136-1137 (D.C. Cir. 1972) (Emphasis added).

The function of jurors should be presumed to be in response to their sworn duty – that they will "truthfully and without prejudice and partiality try all issues . . . and render true verdicts according to the evidence," N.C. Gen. Stat. §9-14. Efforts before this Court to limit the exercise of jury discretion or judgment have failed. In *Winston v. United States*, 172 U.S. 303 (1898), this Court noted that an attempt to limit jury discretion in a capital case was impermissible. Mr. Justice Harlan, for the Court in *McGautha v. California* concluded:

> we find it quite impossible to say that committing to the untrammeled discretion of the jury, the power to pronounce life or death in capital cases is offensive to anything in the Constitution. *quoted* in 408 U.S. at 427 (Powell, J. dissenting).

The underlying assumption upon which *McGautha* was based is important and relevant; the assumption is that juries routinely "will act with due regard for the consequences of their decision . . . ." 408 U.S. at 387-388 (Burger C. J. dissenting).

The theory of systematic jury nullification in a mandatory sentence statute situation, in order to be credible, requires that one assume that only a few defendants accused of first degree murder are ever convicted of the capital charge. The fact is that in the two and one-half years since the *Waddell*

decision, the death row population has grown to 107, indicating dramatically that juries are not swerving from their sworn duty to render true verdicts according to the evidence and the applicable law.

A second assumption one must make in order to accept the theory of wide spread jury nullification is that jurors lightly regard their oaths, that they disregard the law as given by the judge and that they are in fact nothing more than a vehicle for bias, prejudice, and partiality.

Clearly where men and women of conscience, serving under oath, knowing the gravity of their decision, make up the jury there can be no systematized or arbitrary variance from true verdicts required by law and the North Carolina Constitution.

Petitioners point to the infrequent impositions of death sentences. Respondent urges that something greater than mere paucity of death penalty verdicts must be shown in support thereof.

Petitioners seem to say that there must of necessity be arbitrariness and invidious discrimination because so few, relatively speaking, are finally convicted and sentenced to death. Petitioners' suggestion that a relatively small number, in and of itself, raises a presumption of invidious arbitrariness is without merit. After all, this Court grants review in only approximately 1% of the cases in which appeals and petitions for review are filed.[5]

> (c) There is no constitutional infirmity in the jury's being informed that the consequences of a guilty verdict for first degree murder is the death penalty, with no jury option for sentence recommendation.

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5 *The Supreme Court, 1973 Term*, 88 Harvard L. Rev. 41, 277 (1974), *The Supreme Court, 1974 Term*, 89 Harvard L. Rev. 47, 278 (1975)

The general rule in North Carolina is that the trial judge has the sole responsibility for rendering judgments upon jury verdicts within the limits prescribed by statute.

> The sole responsibility of the jury is to decide the guilt or innocence without being hindered by the quantum of punishment possible, probable or certain upon conviction. *State v. Davis*, 238 N.C. 252, 77 S.E.2d 630 (1953).

Exceptions to this general rule are allowed only for "compelling reasons".

> Thus in a capital case if the jury appears to be confused or uncertain, the trial judge should act to alleviate such uncertainty or confusion. Specifically, if the trial judge observes that the jury is confused or uncertain as to whether one of its permissive verdicts would result in a mandatory death sentence, in our opinion, sufficient compelling reason exists to justify his informing the jury of the consequence of their possible verdicts. *State v. Britt*, 285 N.C. 256, 272, 204 S.E.2d 817 (1974).

In the *Britt* case, during *voir dire* a juror asked about the punishment, manifesting his opposition to capital punishment. When the verdict was first returned, the jury attempted to give an impermissible verdict, "First degree murder, with mercy." There was clearly demonstrated a need to tell the jury that the old practice which permitted recommendations was no longer permissible and that the mandatory punishment was death.

Amplifying the *Britt* holding, our State Supreme Court held in three subsequent cases, *State v. Anthony Carey*, 285 N.C. 497, 206 S.E.2d 213 (1974), *State v. Albert Carey*, 285 N.C. 509, 206 S.E.2d 222 (1974), and *State v. Bell*, 287 N.C. 248, 21 S.E.2d 53 (1975), that it was error for a trial judge to refuse to permit counsel, during jury selection *voir dire*, to advise prospective jurors that death was the mandatory penalty for first degree murder and to inquire about their attitudes toward capital punishment.

To clarify the *Britt* restriction on penalty information being furnished to capital jurors, the General Assembly enacted N.C. Gen. Stat. §15-176.3, §15-176.4 and §15-176.5, which provide that either party "may inform" prospective jurors during jury selection, that *upon request* the court "shall instruct" the jury as to penalty, and that either party in its argument "may indicate" the penalty.

These statutes are consistent with the *Britt* decision's language:

> Such an argument to the jury would be improper for the reason that the law of this State is otherwise. Counsel may, in his argument to the jury, in any case, read or state to the jury a statute or other rule of law relevant to such case, including the statutory provision fixing the punishment for the offense charged .... He may not, however, state the law incorrectly or read to the jury a statutory provision which has been declared unconstitutional. See, *State v. Banner*, 149 N.C. 519, 526, 63 S.E. 84. Nor may counsel argue to the jury that the law ought to be otherwise, that the punishment provided thereby is too severe and, therefore, the jury should find the defendant not guilty of the offense charged but should find him guilty of a lesser offense or acquit him entirely.
>
> *State v. Dillard*, 285 N.C. 72, 203 S.E. 2d 6 (1974), did not hold that counsel, in his argument to the jury, cannot inform or remind the jury that the death penalty must be imposed in the event it should return a verdict of guilty upon a capital charge. Rather *Dillard* stands for the proposition that counsel may not argue the question of punishment in the sense of attacking the validity, constitutionality, or propriety of the imposition of the death penalty. *State v. Britt, supra.*, 285 N.C. at 273.

The purpose of the legislation following the Court's decision in *Britt* was to clarify what counsel could properly

inquire about and argue to the jury. The General Assembly thereby recognized that "compelling reasons" must include the necessity that the jury know clearly, and not be misled as to their lack of sentencing discretion since the *Furman* decision. The gravity of the case and possible penalty requires that juries not be misinformed or confused as to any aspect of the law.

> (d) The trial judge's action in submitting lesser included offenses to the jury where the evidence warrants their submission is not violative of the Constitution.

Contrary to petitioners' assertion, the trial judge does not submit to the jury lesser included offenses as possible verdicts according to his personal whim or caprice. He is, however required to tailor the possible verdicts to the evidence before the jury. In borderline cases, doubt on the question of submitting lesser offenses is resolved in favor of the defendant. *State v. Vestal*, 283 N.C. 249, 252, 195 S.E.2d 297 (1973).

It is clear that a defendant is not entitled to a lesser included offense instruction unless there is some evidence that would support a conviction of that charge. *United States v. Bishop*, 412 U.S. 346, 361 (1973); *Sansone v. United States*, 380 U.S. 343, 350 (1965).

Respondent here incorporates by reference the portions of its *Fowler* brief (pages 36-38) which illustrate the bounds within which lesser included offenses may be submitted to a jury.

With respect to petitioners' speculation that juries might return verdicts of acquittal of more serious offenses and guilty of a lesser offense of which there is no substantial evidence of guilt, our Court has said:

> The defendant, however, cannot complain that 'the jury, by an act of grace,' has found him guilty of a lesser offense. 'Such verdicts occur now and then, despite the efforts of the courts to discourage them. When they do ... since they are favorable to the accused, it is settled law that they will not be disturbed.' *State v. Bentley*, 223

N.C. 563, 27 S.E.2d 738; *State v. Roy*, 233 N.C. 558, 64 S.E.2d 840; *State v. Matthews*, 231 N.C. 617, 58 S.E.2d 625; . . *State v. Robertson*, 210 N.C. 266, 186 S.E. 247. See also *State v. Mitchner*, 256 N.C. 620, 124 S.E.2d 831. *State v. Stephens*, 244 N.C. 380 (1956), quoted in *State v. Vestal*, 283 N.C. 249, 252, 195 S.E. 2d 297 (1973)

Respondent argues that such verdicts are rare, occurring only infrequently, and are not the product of any sort of arbitrary or capricious exercise of discretion such as might have been forbidden by *Furman*. To be sure, the recipient of the "grace" of an errant jury cannot complain. In the absence of evidence of a pattern of discrimination, one who is among the great many convicted of the more serious offense on competent evidence should not be able to complain. The State tolerates the unsupported lesser verdict, just as it occasionally witnesses a clearly guilty accused go free because of a renegade jury's inability or unwillingness to convict, because it has no other choice.

The jury system, like democracy, is not perfect, but it is the best system of criminal justice yet devised by men. Its failings are structured to protect the accused. That all capital defendants are not the recipients of unsupported verdicts of lesser included offenses is not a constitutional hand-hold for those properly convicted of a capital crime.

(e) The exercise of executive clemency by the Governor is properly an unfettered, independent and judicially unreviewable act of mercy.

The discretion vested in the Governor of the State of North Carolina by the Constitution of North Carolina, in Article III, Section 5(6), is the authority to grant a reprieve, to commute a death sentence imposed upon any defendant or to grant to such defendant an absolute pardon, and to refuse to disturb such sentence imposed upon a different defendant. This authority is the exclusive prerogative of the Governor, *State v. Lewis*, 226 N.C. 249 37S.E.2d 691(1946). It is very similar to the powers conferred upon the President of the

United States by Article II, Section 2(1.) of the Constitution of the United States.

This Court in, *Schick v. Reed*, 419 U.S. 256, (1974) held that executive clemency on the national level was properly unfettered. That result applies with equal fervor to the power of a State's chief executive to constitutionally grant clemency as an unfettered excerise of mercy. This traditional power has existed and has been exercised by the Governors of every state, and by the President of the United States, since the beginning of the Republic.

The Constitution's framers sought to make executive clemency a matter of mercy unrestricted. Hamilton observed in *Federalist* No. 74:

> Humanity and good policy conspire to dictate that the benign prerogative of pardoning should be as little as possible fettered or embarrassed. The Criminal Code of every country partakes so much of necessary severity, that without an easy access to exceptions in favor of unfortunate guilt, justice would wear a countenance too sanguinary and cruel. *The Federalist*, Wright Ed. 473 (1961).

The Governor's function, in his exercise of constitutionally granted power is to review, just as the appellate courts review the trial court's rulings as to evidence and questions of law, the verdicts and judgments of the criminal justice system. The independent exercise by a Governor of his clemency judgment cannot be called freakish or arbitrary merely because another governor might have reached different conclusions.

(f) That all persons tried for first degree murder under North Carolina law are not convicted and sentenced to death does not invalidate the death penalty.

The traditional legislative arguments against the death penalty decry the excessive loss of life. However, here, petitioners have approached the death penalty on the basis that the punishment of death is now constitutionally suspect

because, they think, too few are executed or slated for execution in the normal operation of our mandatory death penalty statute. Petitioners equate the careful selectivity inherent in the operation of our jury system, with an arbitrariness which they impute obliquely to the racism of a day gone by. Logically, their conclusions do not follow, and factually racism does not exist in our criminal justice system. In the words of Chief Justice Burger, dissenting in *Furman*, 408 U.S. at 388-89:

> . . .(T)o assume from the mere fact of relative infrequency that only a random assortment of pariahs are sentenced to death, is to cast grave doubt on the basic integrity of our jury system.

The essence of petitioners' contentions is that even under a mandatory death sentence statute there is inherent in the system, which guaranteed them a fair trial and a unanimous jury verdict, such fatal flaws of discretion and human judgment that the death penalty cannot be constitutionally implemented. Respondent disputes this contention and urges that each of the steps taken in the trial were either required by the Constitution or clearly permitted by it and are inherent in our traditional system of jury trials.

Petitioners' argument, if at all well founded – and Respondent urges it is not – would apply with equal force and persuasion to the punishments of life imprisonment, to imprisonment for a term of years, and then to any imprisonment at all.

The mandate of the Eighth Amendment, even as interpreted by the majority in *Furman v. Georgia*, does not contemplate or require that human judgment of the type complained of here should be forbidden in capital cases.

Respondent here incorporates by reference from its *Fowler* brief its discussion (pages 22-33) directed to Petitioners' contentions that the *mere existence* of the judgmental powers of the prosecutor, jury, judge and governor are sufficient, without more, to invalidate Respondent's statutes mandating capital punishment.

VI

THE ASSERTION THAT AN ENLIGHTENED AND MODERN PUBLIC OPINION HAS OVERWHELMINGLY REPUDIATED CAPITAL PUNISHMENT AS EXCESSIVELY CRUEL IS WITHOUT SUPPORT.

The Court, even before *Furman*, had accorded the Eighth Amendment's "cruel and unusual punishments" clause a level of flexibility in that it is "not fastened to the obsolete but may acquire meaning as public opinion becomes enlightened by a humane justice." *Weems v. United States*, 217 U.S.349, 378 (1909) and "must draw its meaning from the evolving standards of decency that mark the progress of a maturing society." *Trop v. Dulles*, 356 U.S. 86, 101 (1958)

> Nevertheless the court up to now has never actually held that a punishment has become impermissibly cruel due to a shift in the weight of accepted social values; nor has the court suggested judicially manageable criteria for measuring such a shift in moral consensus . . .
>
> The Court's quiescence in this area can be attributed to the fact that in a democratic society legislatures, not courts, are constituted to respond to the will and consequently the moral values of the people. *Furman v. Georgia*, 408 U.S. at 383 (Burger, C. J., dissenting).

In judging whether or not a given penalty is morally acceptable, most courts have said that the punishment is valid unless 'it shocks the conscience and sense of justice of the people. *Furman*, 408 U.S. at 360 (Opinion of Marshall, J.).

Mr. Justice Marshall further noted, *Id.*, that

> whether or not a punishment is cruel and unusual depends, not on whether its mere mention

> "shocks the conscience and sense of justice of the people", but on "whether people who are fully informed as to the purposes of the penalty and its liabilities would find the penalty shocking, unjust, and unacceptable."

But, to require such an "informed opinion" would substitute and create a judicial autocracy on the theory that mere elected legislators in a state in which capital punishment's diminution or abolition has been debated in every session of the General Assembly since 1950 are not informed.

In order to achieve the result which Petitioners would urge, and in order for their factual premises to be correct, i.e., that an enlightened and modern public opinion has repudiated capital punishment, one must necessarily define "enlightened" in a jocular sense, as being confined to "those who agree with me". While admittedly in North Carolina, there is a vigorous minority of the populace who disapprove of the imposition of capital punishment, their efforts have been properly directed to the legislative arena, and it is there that they have suffered repeated defeats in their efforts to totally abolish capital punishment.

Public opinion surveys, for what they are worth, and Respondent does not urge them as totally authoritative, tend to support the thesis that the public accepts and recognizes the necessity of capital punishment for the most heinous of crimes by a ratio of roughly two to one. See S. Rep. No. 93 - 721, 93rd Congress, Second Session, 13-14 (Reprinting polls). See for example the Illinois experience, where voters disapproved abolition of capital punishment by a 64.3% vote. California voters, when faced with the question of reinstatement of the death penalty, approved by a better than two thirds majority, see Amicus brief of California in *Fowler* at 37-38.

As Mr. Justice Marshall said in *Furman*, 408 U.S. at 360, quoting from *United States v. Rosenberg*, 195 F.2d 583, 608 (2nd Cir. 1952), *cert. denied*, 344 U.S. 838 (1952):

> Judge Frank once noted . . . "before it reduces a sentence as 'cruel and unusual', (a court) must have reasonably good assurances that the sentence offends the 'common conscience'. And in any context, such a standard–the community's attitude–is usually an unknowable. It resembles a slithery shadow, since one can seldom learn at all accurately, what the community, or a majority, actually feels. Even a carefully taken 'public opinion poll' would be inconclusive in a case like this."

Contemporary standards of decency may to some extent be determined by reference to legislative judgments of the people's chosen representatives and the jury's response to the question of capital punishment.

"The assessment of popular opinion is essentially a legislative, not a judicial, function." 408 U.S. at 443 (Burger, C. J. dissenting).

> . . .(T)he primacy of the legislative role narrowly confines the scope of judicial inquiry. Whether or not proveable, and whether or not true at all times, in a democracy the legislative judgment is presumed to embody the basic standards of decency prevailing in the society. This presumption can only be negated by unambiguous and compelling evidence of legislative default. 408 U.S. at 384 (Burger, C. J. dissenting).

There is no evidence of legislative default. That there have been no executions actually carried out in recent years is attributable, in part, to the fact that there are before this Court petitions for writs of certiorari in every death case affirmed by the North Carolina Supreme Court. There are, of course, stays of execution issued by our court pending the outcome, first of *Fowler*, and now, the Petitioners' cases. Likewise, the impact of *Furman* and legislative reenactments have cancelled some death sentences. Other cases since then have progressed through meticulous state court appellate review and now are here on petition for writ of certiorari.

At the trial level it may be fair to say, as petitioners do, that the death penalty is not frequently imposed, when

compared to the number of reported homicides, though there are 107 valid death sentences now outstanding in North Carolina.

> To be sure, the penalty of death is infrequently imposed An entirely valid inference from this bare fact would be, not that the society had repudiated the death penalty, but that it wishes to preserve its use to a small number of cases. A reluctance to impose a penalty is not necessarily the same as its repudiation. Polsby, "The Death of Capital Punishment? *Furman v. Georgia*," 1972 Sup. Ct. Rev. 24.

Respondent earnestly contends that the public has not repudiated the death penalty as a legitimate punitive sanction for serious, grievious crimes such as first degree murder.

VII

THE DOCTRINE OF JUDICIAL RESTRAINT REQUIRES THAT THE COURT DEFER TO THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH THE QUESTION OF THE WISDOM OF CAPITAL PUNISHMENT.

In the words of Mr. Justice Frankfurter dissenting in *Trop v. Dulles, supra*, 356 U.S. at 128:

> The power to invalidate legislation must not be exercised as if, either in constitutional theory or in the art of government, it stood as the sole bulwark against unwisdom or excesses of the moment.

Later in the same opinion Mr. Justice Frankfurter noted, 356 U.S. at 119-120, quoted in 408 U.S. at 432-433 (Powell, J. dissenting):

> What is always basic when the power of Congress to enact legislation is challenged is the appropriate approach to judicial review of congressional legislation . . . . In making this determination the court sits in judgment on the

> action of a coordinate branch of the government by keeping unto itself–as it must under our Constitutional system–the final determination of its own power to act . . . . It is not easy to stand aloof and allow want of wisdom to prevail, to disregard one's own strongly held view of what is wise in the conduct of affairs. But it is not the business of this court to pronounce policy. It must observe a fastidious regard for limitation on its own power, and this precludes the court's giving effect to its own notions of what is wise or politic. That self-restraint is of the essence in the observance of the judicial oath, for the Constitution has not authorized the judges to sit in judgment on the wisdom of what Congress and the Executive branch do.

There are basically three overwhelming arguments in favor of judicial restraint in these cases. First, the court lacks the authority to substitute its judgment for that of thirty-five state legislatures and the Congress of the United States on an issue so peculiarly legislative in nature. Petitioners' arguments are extensive, thought-provoking and at times eloquent, but they are arguments properly directed to legislative bodies.

> This Court is not empowered to sit as a court of sentencing review, implementing the personal views of its members on the proper role of penology. To do so is to usurp a function committed to the legislative branch and beyond the power and competency of this court. 408 U.S. at 458 (Powell, J. dissenting).

> The most expansive reading of the leading constitutional cases does not remotely suggest that this court has been granted a roving commission, either by the founding fathers or by the framers of the Fourteenth Amendment, to strike down laws that are based upon notions of policy or morality suddenly found unacceptable by a majority of the court. 408 U.S. at 467 (Rehnquist, J. dissenting).

Second, the Court has the power to effect its views, and its decisions are parctically beyond review. There is no reviewing appellate forum. The only safeguard against the Court's implementation of its own desires or notions of what is best is the Court itself.

> The admonition of Mr. Justice Stone dissenting in *United States v. Butler* must be constantly borne in mind:
>
> > While unconstitutional exercise of power by the executive and legislative branches of the government is subject to judicial restraint, the only check upon our own exercise of power is our own sense of self-restraint. 297 U.S. 1, 78-79 . . . (1936). 408 U.S. at 467 (Rehnquist, J. dissenting).

Third, the irreversibility and permanence of this Court's decision, if it be adverse to the statutory schemes of capital punishment before the Court today, effectively bars reconsideration of that decision in the near future, even if the Court subsequently were to recognize the error of its ways.

> The sobering disadvantage of constitutional adjudication of this magnitude is the universality and permanence of the judgment, the enduring merit of legislative action in its responsiveness to the democratic process, and to revision and change: mistaken judgments may be corrected and refinements perfected. 408 US at 462 (Powell, J. dissenting).

Respondent urges that Mr. Justice Holmes was correct in his assessment that the review of legislative choices is ". . . the gravest and most delicate duty that this Court is called on to perform." *Blodgett v. Holden*, 275 U.S. 142, 147-148 (1927) (separate opinion).

Respondent likewise urges that, for this court especially,

> The highest judicial duty is to recognize the limits on judicial power and to permit the democratic processes to deal with matters falling outside of those limits. 408 U.S. at 405 (Burger, C. J., dissenting).

CONCLUSION

It is important that the Court recall how this case came to be here. Petitioners committed a needless, senseless brutal murder in the course of an unresisted armed robbery of a convenience store of about $280.00. As Mr. Justice Marshall observed in his *Furman* opinion, 408 U.S. at 315:

> The criminal acts with which we are confronted are ugly, vicious, reprehensible acts. Their sheer brutality cannot and should not be minimized.

Likewise, as Mr. Justice Blackmun observed in his dissent in *Furman*, 408 U.S. at 414:

> . . .(T)hese cases are here because offenses to innocent victims were perpetrated. This fact, and the terror that occasioned it, and the fear that stalks the streets of many of our cities today perhaps deserve not to be entirely overlooked.

Roscoe Pound in III *JURISPRUDENCE* §92, p.264, (1959), notes that "Criminal law is the primary resource of legal order for securing social interests immediately as such."

Respondent urges that acceptance of Petitioners' arguments would have the effect of disabling the states in protection of society from crime. The use of federal judicial power in derogation of a valid social interest was soundly condemned by Mr. Justice Jackson in his dissent in *Ashcraft v. Tennessee*, 322 U.S. 143, 174 (1944). The potential tragedy, Respondent urges, is that

> . . . judicial overreaching may result in sacrifice of the equally important right of the people to govern themselves. The due process and equal protection clauses of the Fourteenth Amendment were never intended to destroy the states' power to govern themselves. Black, J. in *Oregon v. Mitchell*, 400 U.S. 112, 126 (1970).

Respondent contends that this Honorable Court has the same responsibility under the Constitution to protect the public interests of the State of North Carolina in the exercise of its retained sovereign rights that it has to protect any other constitutionally protected right, whether it be guaranteed to an individual or to a State.

In this respect, judicial modification of established, precedent-hardened constitutional law permitting the imposition of capital punishment through the use of "contemporary standards" is no more permissible or appropriate than it would be, using the same guise of "contemporary standards", to deprive an individual of his Fifth Amendment right not to incriminate himself or his Sixth Amendment right to trial by a jury.

Petitioners here complain of the mere existence of the authority of public officials to make judgments, not any denial of equal protection occasioned by any asserted abuse, real or imagined.

As Justice Powell said in dissent in *Furman*, 408 U.S. at 433-434:

> The due process clause of the Fourteenth Amendment imposes on the judiciary a similar obligation to scrutinize state legislation, but the proper exercise of that constitutional obligation . . . (requires) a full recognition of the several considerations set forth above – the affirmative references to capital punishment in the Constitution, the prevailing precedents of this Court, the limitations on the exercise of our power imposed by tested principles of judicial self-restraint, and the duty to avoid encroachment on the powers conferred upon state and federal legislatures. In the face of these considerations only the most conclusive of objective demonstrations could warrant this Court in holding capital punishment *per se* unconstitutional.

Respondent urges that both questions phrased in its Brief should be answered clearly, emphatically and definitively, "No".

Respondent contends that capital punishment, as provided for under North Carolina law, does not violate either the Eighth Amendment or the Fourteenth Amendment, and that the judgments of the Supreme Court of North Carolina should be affirmed.

Respectfully submitted,

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CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that I am admitted to practice law before the Supreme Court of the United States; that I have served copies of the within BRIEF FOR RESPONDENT by depositing three copies of same in the United States Mails at Raleigh, North Carolina, addressed to: Jack Greenberg, 10 Columbus Circle, New York, 10019; Anthony G. Amsterdam, Stanford University Law School, Stanford, California 94305; Adam Stein, Chambers, Stein, Ferguson & Lanning, 157 East Rosemary Street, Chapel Hill, North Carolina 27514; Edward H. McCormick, Post Office Box 38, Lillington, North Carolina 27546; and W. A. Johnson, Post Office Box 146, Lillington, North Carolina 27546; *first class postage prepaid.*

This the 25th day of March, 1976.

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